PRIVATE HISTORY

OF

THE COURT

OF

ENGLAND.

LONDON:

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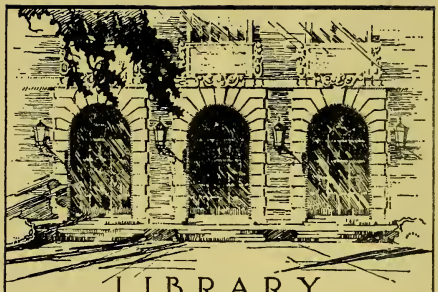

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PRIVATE HISTORY

OF THE

COURT OF ENGLAND.

VOL. II.

THE

PRIVATE HISTORY

OF THE

COURT OF ENGLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

AINSI VA LE MONDE.

LONDON:
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CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

CHAP. I.

PAGE

An Injured Princess 1

I am a stranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent; no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas! sir,
In what have I offended you? What cause
Hath my behaviour giv'n to your displeasure,
That thus you should proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me?

[SHAKESPEARE.

PAGE

CHAP. II.

An Investigation, and a Tour to the North 14

My lords, I care not if my actions
Were try'd by every tongue; every eye saw them.

Oh! he has kept an evil diet long,
And over much consum'd his royal person.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. III.

Eccentricity 33

My son—be all thy father in *that* hour!

MRS. BAYFIELD'S POEMS.

CHAP. IV.

Fashionable Depravity of the Fifteenth Century 44

It is said, that if one of these beautiful women were to spit in the sea, the waters thereof would be bitter no more.

ALCORAN OF MAHOMET.

PAGE

CHAP. V.

Artful Politics, and fashionable Folly..... 55

His demand
Springs not from well meant, honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity.

New customs,
Tho' they be ever so ridiculous,
Nay, let them be unmanly, yet are followed.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. VI.

The Dissolution of a corrupt Parliament..... 68

You tender more your person's honour than
Your high profession.——————

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. VII.

Nobility..... 80

If you degenerate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

GAY.

PAGE

CHAP. VIII.

A Letter---------- 88

" Our good qualities, more than our errors, expose us to persecution."

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

CHAP. IX.

Delights of Constantinople---------- 109

* Il est bon general, il
Est sans negligence;
Il est sans nez—Sans nez—
Sans nez—Il est sans
Negligence—Sans nez.
Il est sans negligence.
(Chansons, sur les victoires de M. Roquelaire.)

---

* M. de Roquelaire was remarkable for the smallness of his nose; the reader, however trifling his knowledge of the French language may be, will easily see the satire of the repetition of " *Il est sans nez!*" which, though not perfectly correct in the spelling, possesses some point; which it would entirely lose by a translation.

PAGE

CHAP. X.

Ambition and disappointed Love 122

No more my King, for he dishonours me.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. XI.

Treachery and Cruelty inimical to Peace..... 136

Le charme voluptueux de tirer les hommes de l'infortune; ne se fit jamais sentir à ton cœur: tu n'entendis jamais apres tes victoires, un peuple, enivre de joie, t'appeller le doux nom de pere.

LA CROIX.

That delicious charm of delivering mankind from misfortune thine heart has never experienced: never hast thou heard after thy victories, a people, transported with joy, calling thee by the endearing name of father.

CHAP. XII.

Ill assorted Attachment..... 146

——— He never shall find out
Fit mate, but such as some misfortune

Brings him, or mistake—If he love
Withheld by parents; or his happiest choice—
Shall meet already fix'd, in Wedlock bound.

MILTON.

PAGE

CHAP. XIII.

Penance 159

If yet there be a woe
I have not felt, inflict it on me.

ROWE.

CHAP. XIV.

A Mystery elucidated 174

My only love, sprung from my only hate.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. XV.

A careless Husband 190

Like the base Judean
Threw a pearl away

SHAKESPEARE.

PAGE

CHAP. XVI.

Exalted Virtue 202

So good a Lady,
That no tongue dare yet
Pronounce dishonour of her.

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAP. XVII.

Female Degradation 217

She should be wooed,
And not unsought be won.

MILTON.

CHAP. XVIII.

Prophecies 231

The day will come, which nothing can avert
When by the spear, the arrow or the dart,
By night, by day, by force or by design,
Impending death, and certain fate are thine.

POPE'S HOMER.

Conclusion 245

PRIVATE

HISTORY

OF THE

COURT OF ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

AN INJURED PRINCESS.

I am a stranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent; no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas! sir,
In what have I offended you? What cause
Hath my behaviour giv'n to your displeasure,
That thus you should proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me?

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Princess of Savoy had now the mortification of seeing a public testimony of her worth denied to her; and, in an almost total exclusion from society, she wept,

in solitude, over her misfortunes. Reared by her indulgent and valuable mother in the lap of splendor and elegance, every acquired accomplishment was her's that could add dignity to the princess and ornament to the woman. Having beheld continually before her the sweetest and most amiable patterns of conjugal virtue and felicity in her august father and mother, her heart had early panted after domestic happiness. Edward, whom she had seen, and whom she had been long taught to look up to as her future husband, she could not fail of admiring; in whom the most fascinating address was united to all the learning of the age, the polish of the court, and a person eminently beautiful Her heart spoke in his favour, before the welcome embassy of Warwick greeted her ear.

How pregnant, then, were the feelings which assailed her lacerated bosom, when

she found the shafts of unkindness and contempt levelled from the hand of him she most loved, and who still, in spite of all his failings, she could not cease to love! She was well aware that the virtues and faults of princes are swelled and multiplied in their utmost extent, through the false optics of fond partiality, or of envy and disaffection. The self-interested adulator, who thinks his venal praise, when known, will be rewarded, magnifies the great man's virtues; while disappointed ambition, and rebellious faction, ascribe even to the good deeds of royalty a vicious and selfish motive.

While the fond partiality of the princess turned a deaf ear to the detail of Edward's vices, her heart, pleading in his favour, magnified each impulse to good, which she might chance to discover, as an exalted virtue.

During the voluntary seclusion of the princess, a beautiful infant in her neighbourhood became an orphan. She, who never heard the affecting tale of woe unmoved, now eagerly stepped forward to afford her royal assistance to the little sufferer; it was brought home to her, nursed, and reared at her expence.

This act of beneficence gave fresh licence to the unhallowed tongues of her enemies. It was instantly alledged by them to be the illicit offspring of Warwick; and Edward appeared to give credit to the slanderous tale. Her voluntary seclusion from society gave scope to an ill-judging and prejudiced party, to affect a belief in the truth of this scandalous report; but virtue still rose triumphant over the slanderers, and a chosen committee was appointed to investigate the conduct of the princess; who proved, by every

corroborating circumstance, in the most strict inquiry of the disposal of her time, how deeply she had been injured in her heretofore fair reputation.

Her every leisure moment was proved to have been devoted to study, and to the practice of those accomplishments she had, in her early youth, been taught; in planning schemes to promote public charities, and in an universal series of acts of beneficence towards worthy individuals. A writer of those times remarks, what we give in his own words,—"Thatt the Princesse, wythe herr owne fayre handes, did worke marvellous cunnynge and curyous artycles of workemannshippe, whyche she dydde sende unto the fayres and publyckke markettes; and didde cause themm to be soulde for the relieffe of poore orphanes and widowes chyldrenne; and inne one of the chauritable voiges she

tooke to see this pyouse deede fulfylled, shee hadde the heart grieveing mishappe to loose her well belouved and moste deere friende, the daughter off the venaurable Erle of Salisburi, who was throwne from a palfreye whyche the sayde fayre ladie rodde, and was slayne in the twynklinge of an eye; as iffe the Aulmightye was pleased in his wrathe to overwhelme our moste virtuous and excellente Princesse wythe everye bytter mischaunce."

The chosen committee pronounced the conduct of the princess as clear as proofs of unsullied virtue and honour could render it. But the public, though they idolized her for her virtues, thought the testimony not of sufficient publicity; a party still prevailed against her, and even her friends were not fully satisfied.

A few of the learned and pious bishops, who were too enlightened to be enslaved

by particular tenets in religion, and who greatly lamented to see their prince the captive of a bigotted and superstitious woman, were ardent in their zealous endeavours to bring forward every proof of the immaculate virtue of the lovely and injured Bona in the open light of the sun of truth; and so for ever confound her slanderers and oppressors. There was, however, one powerful person who, though incapable from her magnanimity of being the inveterate enemy of any one, was yet no friend to the princess; and her dislike was of more detriment to her cause than the rooted hatred, and deep laid plans, of the Lady Elizabeth Grey. The royal mother of Bona's destined husband, who was blind to every fault of her darling son, was jealously awake to every failing incident to humanity in her, who was so well

calculated, by nature and acquirements, to ascend the English throne.

In her early youth the Princess of Savoy had visited England, and then possessed much of that playful vivaciousness so natural to a young and volatile mind. It has been before remarked, that the mother of Edward was by no means possessed of personal charms; and, as nothing wounds so much in irony as the truth, some remarks of the princess on that head were never forgiven cordially.

The innocent girl meant not to depreciate the duchess, nor did she feel for her the least disrespect; but, with all the frankness and playfulness generally incident to a girl uncommonly pretty, and consequently much admired for that fragile qualification, she wrote to an intimate

friend every thought, as it presented itself to her lively imagination.

The chief subject of this sprightly letter treated of her reception at the English court. The person of her future mother-in-law underwent something of a caricature description; yet so strikingly like the original, that it could not be mistaken. The perfidious Lady Conyers got hold of this fatal letter, and gave it into the hands of her for whom this picture, so far from a flattering one, was designed. The offence was of too flagrant a nature to be pardoned; and Edward, who really loved his mother, so that her commands to him would have been a law, never was even requested by her to return to his duty, by ratifying his sacred promises with the neglected and deserted Princess of Savoy; but, on the contrary, he was rather encouraged in his perseverance of that

desertion, by perceiving, too visibly, the dislike his mother shewed to the alliance with her. Still the exalted conduct of the amiable Bona gained her the love and veneration of the whole kingdom, and its' discerning majority saw how deeply she was injured. But the prince, who had thus contemptuously spurned at an union with her, and who suffered calumniators to vilify her character with impunity, now lost a great part of his popularity; for public *placards* were continually posted up about different parts of the metropolis, by the party of Lady Elizabeth, aspersing the fame of a respectable and august female, and thus rendering her the subject of debate, and the theme of common conversation, amongst the unhallowed multitude: and though a publican, who kept the sign of the Crown, was executed for his punning, when he said he

would make his son heir to the Crown, yet no steps were taken to find out, and bring to justice, these shameful scribblers, who wantonly and basely attacked the reputation of a royal and virtuous princess.

The Lord Chief Justice of England, pure in his principles, impartial in his conduct, as his great predecessor Gascoigne, (who committed the noble Henry V. to prison, for his contempt of justice) gave no heed to the insidious testimonies of the misconduct of the princess; though it was endeavoured, by every plan that could be invented, to bring him over to the adverse party. Occupied with the duties of his high office alone, he heeded not the idle rumours disseminated from day to day against her, and which were contrived, with every aggravation, to be brought to his knowledge: facts alone

could convince his upright mind, and they served only to evince her spotless virtue. Concurring circumstances, he well knew, when brought to light, would convince the public of the falsehood of the tale, and of the malice of it's publishers.

The wise and good were indignant at the calumny; and Lady Elizabeth, whose peculiar circumstances and regard to decorum might have gained her friends amongst some liberal minds, and even some palliators of her conduct among the more rigid, now retained but very few advocates, and those were chiefly bigots to the papal power.

Religion, that sacred principle, is too often made a pretext for covering the designs of private interest, or the views of ambition. Catholics and Protestants worship one God; and would worship him in unison, if the policy of nations had not

encouraged those disorders which have so long and lamentably divided the church. The lower class, constantly the dupe of the great, the rich, and the enlightened, act the parts that their managers have cast for them: the deluded ignorant, whose zeal is for their Saviour, generally become the victims of those, whose chief worship is paid at the shrine of wealth, or the splendid prospects of regal power.

CHAP. II.

AN INVESTIGATION, AND A TOUR TO THE NORTH.

My lords, I care not if my actions
Were try'd by every tongue; every eye saw them.

Oh! he has kept an evil diet long,
And overmuch consum'd his royal person.

SHAKESPEARE.

BUT the most ridiculous and absurd investigation of the Princess Bona's conduct, was the domestic examination of the different portioning out her time in the interior of her household concerns; and all the minutiæ of such conduct were to be reported by faithful witnesses. This was at the instigation of Sir Douglas Malcolm and his lady.

Sir Douglas was the godson, and a distant relation, of that Douglas* who was aiming to wrest the Crown from the King of Scotland, and seat himself on the throne of that kingdom. Rebellion, in any shape, was sweet to him, Sir Douglas; and not being of so enterprising a nature as his kinsman, he judged it safest to attack the weakest; and, unfortunately for the Princess of Savoy, she was his destined victim; for she, during her stay in England, had forgotten to notice him or his lady, who was the daughter of a country apothecary, and both were of so insignificant an appearance that they were easily overlooked amidst the splendor of a court. But this palpable neglect, the pride of Sir Douglas Malcolm, descended from Scottish kings and thanes, could not forgive;

* See Rapin, Hume, &c.

and when other knights, on a set day, performed a tournament in honour of the princess, and each bent the knee before her, as they dismounted from their coursers, Sir Douglas refused to render the customary homage. The youthful princess only laughed at the sturdy pride of this doughty knight, and inquired into the reason of his churlishness, without her good nature being, in the least, offended at it. He gruffly replied to the inquiries, that he had frequently bowed to a princess, whose ancestors, he was proud to say, his own might rank with, and she had never noticed him. The amiable princess apologized for her giddiness in overlooking him, and her apparent want of politeness. His train of illustrious progenitors were then explained to her; and the gracious and condescending princess, influenced by the natural benignity

of her generous heart, expressed her regret at having neglected him; and the better to soothe his wounded pride, she took particular notice of the lady whom he had descended so far from his family dignity as to make his wife. But this female, though made a lady, could not become a gentlewoman, nor draw a line between that polite ease and cheerful freedom, which still preserves its respect to a superior, and that coarse familiarity she had been used to practise with her village companions, the daughters of her father's fellow shopkeepers. Nay, even sometimes, in her conversations with the princess, she would assume airs of superiority, dictate to her, and treat her as if she did her honour by her company. This obliged the princess entirely to withdraw her patronage and acquaintance from this too much elevated lady, who, sinking into her

pristine insignificance, vowed revenge; and when, after the embassy of Warwick, that the prince had been betrothed to Bona, and then refused to ratify his engagements with her, no scheme or artifice was left untried, which might add to the slander already thrown on her character. Her tongue made use of the most virulent calumny and invective against her; alledging, that she, who had been her bosom friend and confidante, could vouch for the truth of all she said; and, strange as it may appear, after an investigation the most scrutinizing, Edward, while he pretended to reject the calumny, cherished and received at his court the base calumniator.

A prince of the blood royal set off to the princess's dwelling one morning, at an early hour, and arrived while she was yet sleeping; slumbering, unsuspecting, in

that sweet calm, the result of an unspotted conscience. She was awaked: she folded a robe about her, and spoke to him through her chamber door.—"Nothing," said she, "can afford me greater satisfaction than that the whole of my conduct should be known." She was then asked if she did not wish for her maids to assist her in dressing? "Oh! no," she replied, "examine them strictly, and keep them till you have done with them; I want them not."

The servants were separately interrogated, and every minute article of their mistress's conduct explained, with all that formal precision which marked the feature of formality, so prominent in those Gothic times. They knew when she drank coffee or chocolate; when she took wine for breakfast, or when she took simple confections, and drank water or milk;

when she dined early or late; but the innocency and benevolence which marked her occupations, determined this prince, who had come prejudiced against her, to entreat the English government to prosecute Sir Douglas Malcolm and his lady.

The late ministry, which composed the senators of England when Cobham presided at their head, were the fixed friends of the princess; and one who visited her in her retirement, could not be prevented from feeling the shafts of calumny on her account, though protected by a character the most sacred, and of an advanced age. Her servants, who were placed as spies on her conduct, yet found her demeanor so correct, her conversation so pure, that they adored, and joyfully cleared by their testimony, a character, the most ennobled, the most virtuous, that

had ever condescended to ally itself to the throne of Great Britain.

A deputation from the lord mayor, the aldermen, and all the companies of different corporations, drew up a petition for Edward to receive and acknowledge his royal bride; but, whether by secret machinations this was suppressed, or from what motive, is not known; Edward never noticed it, and seemed totally blind to his own felicity, by appreciating the worth of an illustrious and virtuous consort. He was, indeed, at that time, suffering great affliction, if the mind can be capable of feeling much of tender woe, that flies with eagerness to various scenes of dissipation; and whose finer feelings, deadened in the Lethean stream of intoxication each succeeding night, rises benumbed in the morning, or else exquisitively alive to all the irritation of nervous affection on the

parching thirst of consuming fever: urging its wretched victim again to have recourse to the same operative opiate, which rouses him to new excesses. But the grief, as the friendship, of Edward was sincere. He seemed likely soon to lose the man who had been, not the *guide* of his thoughtless youth, but the leader and promoter of all those degrading scenes of riot and dissipation, to which the princes were, in some measure, all of them addicted; and which this statesman encouraged by his flattery and example. To him the royal progeny were indebted for that system of licentiousness, libertinism, and want of princely dignity in the choice of their companions, which marked their conduct in maturity: living in open adultery himself, for many years, and while the princes were yet in their bloom, with a woman of the most refined sense and taste, and whose homely

person afforded the dangerous idea, that purity of affection and sentiment, not passion, had the chief share in the connection, he instilled into their young minds the baneful principle, that there were circumstances which excused the most criminal of all connections: even respectable families, in that free thinking age, made no scruple, before her marriage with Lovelace, of receiving her into their circles.

Edward loved this man as his own soul; for to fascinating manners he joined that admirable elocution, which too often knows how to make the "worse appear the better cause." His abilities and acquirements were equalled by very few in the kingdom. Much older than Edward, the prince fondly looked up to him as his guide and counsellor. The artful statesman formed him from a boy; indulging him in all those vices to which human

propensity is but too much addicted, especially when aided by power, and under the influence of a pernicious example.

As Edward grew older, his beloved companion seemed almost necessary to his existence.

Lovelace had supported Lady Elizabeth in all her schemes; this still rivetted the prince's affection for him, and in every situation Edward became the firm prop of a man, with whom all the partizans of the house of York were at continual variance. Strange infatuation! which stands on a precipice, leaning on a reed for support, which hangs over, and only accelerates the fall of the victim into the abyss beneath; for it was notoriously true, though Lovelace kept a high station in office, through the fond attachment of Edward, that he was the avowed defender

of the house of Lancaster: and we seldom find great vices take a seat in an ordinary mind; for often in the same composition is found a firm adherence to some favourite principle, to which the applauding heart and conscience give the name of virtue. Thus Lovelace, in every change of fortune, remained unshaken in his party principles; and he died, as he lived, the defender of his favourite cause.

The excesses of his life had brought on a dropsical complaint, which was pronounced to be fatal. Edward, to dissipate his chagrin, shunned the chamber of sickness and death; it was a scene by no means in unison with an harassed mind and a debilitated body; debility, the effect of excess, and the mind sick with seeing how visibly his princely popularity was on the decline.

He endeavoured to retrieve it by again

" staging himself to the people's eyes." He knew they still loved to see him. Dearly they had loved his father: the recollection of the good, the great, the pious, and domestic father of Edward, whose very faults were amiable weaknesses, which only more endeared him to his people's affection, could not but revive in the hearts of his subjects that love, which they were desirous to transfer to his son.

Edward made a tour to the north of England. The inhabitants of each place he passed through found him, indeed, changed in person, but yet nothing appeared capable of destroying his native beauty.

He gave largely, as he journied along, to public charities; and his wan and faded form was looked upon by those who loved his friend, and who now lay on the bed of death, as a token of

regard to the companion of his youth. "Our prince," said they, "is still the same beneficent and excellent hearted pride of the house of York," and he was greeted, wherever he passed, with loud and reiterated huzzas.

He paid a visit of a few days at the seat of Lord Stanley, whither his constant follower, Lady Elizabeth Grey, repaired, and added pleasure, by her presence, to the welcome that nobleman afforded him. He afterwards honoured Lord Fitzwalter with a similar stay under his hospitable roof; and report says, that not the charms of Lady Elizabeth's society, nor the grace and elegance which distinguished the conversation of Lady Fitzwalter, could prevent his falling into the most disgusting intoxication every evening during his visit to the generous nobleman. The vassals of Lord Fitzwalter were obliged

each night to carry Edward to his bed in a state of degrading stupidity; and it began to be remarked, that the huzzas of the mob, and the sumptuous dinners and tournaments in honour of the prince, proceeded more from ridiculous and ostentatious custom, and the desire of the nobility to regale and divert themselves, than from any real affection they bore to Edward; for he left each place without any visible regret being felt by his subjects.

Before he returned from his northern tour, he paid a short visit to a nobleman, whom he knew to be the champion of truth, and the bold reprehender of vice, in whatever breast she chose to fix her seat; and though the dignity of her protector might be exalted to the highest pinnacle of earthly power.

The despotism of the times was incapable of "blanching his cheek with fear."

He had long and ably filled the office of lord chancellor, but retired in disgust from a system he thought getting corrupt; and his principles being so diametrically opposite from those then presiding at the helm of affairs. Edward, whose mind naturally loved virtue, though it was fatally blighted in its opening blossom by ill example, ever bore testimony to the worth of this excellent nobleman: he was surprized to meet with a cold and distant welcome, and shortened his visit as much as he possibly could, consistent with those rules of politeness which he was never known to transgress. As he rose to take his departure, the venerable lord, without any fawning intreaty for his stay, looked at him with the contracted brow of admonitory and offended worth, and severely reprimanded him for his licentious conduct; ending his exhortations with these

memorable words: "Go home, Sir;—shew yourself a prince indeed: quit your infamous connexions, be just to the Princess of Savoy, and bestow on your loyal people an unquestioned heir of the house of York."

The momentary impulse this keen expression gave to Edward's mind, the conviction of the undaunted power of worth and virtue, were soon repelled on his arrival in the metropolis, by an excess of grief at the demise of the friend he so much valued, the constant companion of his convivial hours; the versatility of whose talents had never failed to amuse him either in the gay hours of mirth, the sober moments of cool reflection, or the sad shocks which assailed a tottering throne. He declared his intention of following his friend to the grave, as chief mourner; but some papers being found in possession

of the deceased, which proved how dearly he was attached to the interests of the house of Lancaster, whose party, though it daily declined, was eagerly on the watch to seize every opportunity of asserting its pretensions, the Duke of Glocester, who was shrewd and penetrating, and who, whatever might have been his future faults, easily could see, and support the true friends of the government, called a council of the lords of the realm, who loudly protested against their prince condescending to follow, as a mourner, the funeral of any one of his subjects, whose rank had been beneath that of a baron.

This decree being past, they judged that the late breach of integrity, of which the defunct had been guilty, had no cause to be alledged against him; as, from the known impetuosity of Edward's temper, he might determine to shew that magnani-

mity to a departed statesman, whose principles, however mistaken, were now for ever deprived of injuring the house of York or any of its descendants.

CHAP. III.

ECCENTRICITY.

My son—be all thy father in *that* hour!
MRS. BAYFIELD'S POEMS.

SIR Walter Neville was one of the richest knights that lived in the reign of Edward IV. His character might be truly said to be a compound of contrarieties. Parsimony and generosity held their divided sway over a mind that, difficult to be developed, was yet possessed of much sincerity and great goodness. He had wedded a charming woman for love alone, unportioned, except in charms and virtues, in which nature appeared to have been truly bountiful towards her: yet he

ever seemed to hold it forth, as an invariable maxim, that no man should marry, except he regarded fortune as the chief good in a matrimonial union.

This extraordinary man has been known to count the dishes over to himself, which he beheld on the tables of his friends, and express his sentiments afterwards, that he wondered not at the ruin of several noble families, when their extravagance was so great; though perhaps œconomy had blended itself with gentility, in the happy art of making a frugal meal appear elegant. He would appear shocked at the splendid dress of his niece, the beautiful Matilda, while for his own wife he thought no outward ornament too costly or expensive; and while the citizens of London would attach their velvet garments round their wrists with strings of pearl, or *cordons* of gold, he has taken a

piece of packthread, and, totally regardless of form or shew, tied it round his sleeves, and, in that guise, entered the assemblies of his noble relations, which have been composed of all that grandeur or beauty could combine to render them brilliant.

Presents in that age were seldom made, except at Christmas; and then they were, if the donors were wealthy, of the utmost magnificence. Sir Walter would give to his poor tenants, in private, with a strict charge not to say a word to any one, money, food, and firing, with the utmost profusion, and made them truly comfortable at that rejoicing, though dreary, time of the year.

He would afterwards repair to his sister's, cast a grudging look on the festivity of her entertainments, and the hospitable bounty of her board, and make his niece

Matilda a present, in value, perhaps, of about *twenty shillings!* which she accepted with smiling good nature, knowing the eccentricity of her unaccountable uncle.

Grief for a beloved and angelic daughter, snatched from him in her early bloom, it is thought, hastened to put a period to the life of this extraordinary character; who, possessed of all the tender feelings, though careful to a fault in concealing them from observation, found the anguish of parental feeling could not be disguised. He lingered for some months in severe illness, brought on through sorrrow for his irreparable loss. Sensible of his approaching dissolution, he called his son, the inheritor of his title and large fortune, to his bedside, and addressed him as follows.

" My beloved Walter, the loss of your

adored sister, and some certain presages from the nature of my infirmities, assure me that death has now laid his icy hand upon me, and will claim me as his property in, perhaps, a few hours! I feel strength at this present time, while I yet live, to give you some salutary counsel, which I trust may be your guide, and make you find conscience an approving friend through your journey of life. I have not given my mind to learning, as you have done: happier, it may be, it would have made me; for in making human nature my study, more than books, I have seen so much to condemn in this immoral age, that it has given to my character a moroseness which is not natural to it. I have beheld want, accompanied with merit, pining under all the accumulated horrors that indigence and oppression could inflict. To relieve it has been

my constant study; but so numerous are the victims of poverty, that I found it was an hydra-labour:—yet, Oh! when such apply for your assistance, let your heart and purse be ever open to solace and vomfort them; but particularly watch over, with a careful eye, that desert, which, shrinking from the thought of asking relief, and used to better fortune, envisages poverty with tenfold horrors, by the recollection of what once was their happy lot.

"To my nearest relations I have appeared, perhaps, wanting in kindness, by not ameliorating, as far as I was able, a situation, in some degree limited, according to the high rank they held in life. My niece, Matilda, has a most excellent heart, but I fear she is thoughtless and extravagant: her mother idolizes her, and can deny her nothing. What, then, would

be the use of wasting my property to the purpose only of having it lavished away in dress and expensive entertainments?"—"Pardon me, dear and reverend parent," said the son, "for interrupting you; but I should imagine——"—"Interrupt me not again," said Sir Walter; "I confess I may have done wrong in this instance, and I leave to your generosity and excellent understanding to act as your own feelings may dictate to you: I think your own understanding will be a guide on which you may ever safely rely. In your choice of a partner for life, that understanding must also determine you. Your mother was my first and only love: in her I imagined I beheld not only beauty, but every thing amiable and excellent in woman; and she was pure and virtuous as an angel: but, too conscious of the power she held over me, she has usurped

uncontrolled and unbounded sway over my person, my house, and fortune; and has often, too often, played the tyrant.—The inheritance I bequeath to you renders you totally independent of any one: and mark me, I do not say to you, imitate not the example of your father!—for I would wish that true affection for a deserving object might be the sole motive for your marrying: yet I have often observed, that a woman who is very handsome, and who brings no dower to a man uncommonly rich, is very apt to imagine her beauty gives her full right to rule him with a rod of iron, and that he is but too much obliged by the exchange of her personal attractions for his splendid fortune."

The knight, soon after this exhortation, fell into a profound sleep, and in a few days from that period resigned his breath; leaving the young Sir Walter in possession

of immense wealth, and those honours which were his hereditary right.

He was, in many respects, as great an oddity as his father; but his eccentricities were all of the amiable and interesting kind, and his character only appeared extraordinary, because his merit was uncommon in an age where young men were remarkable for their licentiousness and selfish extravagance.

Sir Walter Neville, though very much devoted to literary pursuits, sought with indefatigable care to perform the last counsel of his father; while he first was determined, especially as it was left to his own option, to take care of those relatives, for whom he thought his departed parent had not done sufficient.

His beneficent aunt, the sister of that parent, she, whose house and hospitable table were ever open to merit as well sa

to rank, found her income rendered easy through the means of her worthy nephew, and her heart satisfied, by finding the power of doing good united to that will she had ever evinced for the performance of benevolent deeds. Sir Walter's cousin, the lovely Matilda, warm in her friendships, enthusiastic in her love, had bestowed her hand on a young gentleman of good family, but not at that time abundantly gifted with the plenitude of fortune's favours. Sir Walter knew the unbounded generosity and liberality of her soul, and therefore limited a kind allowance which he made her, towards the attainment of elegant and domestic gentility.

Much given to the study of ancient and modern authors, he stored his mind with that wisdom, which took virtue for its guide, and turned abhorrent from the path of vice. To the lovely and virtuous fe-

male, who, from misfortunes uncreated by her own conduct, was obliged to unite strict œconomy with that habitual elegance which her former situation in life rendered natural to her, Sir Walter, with that refined attention known only to a few delicate minds, would administer a temporary and unexpected relief, in that genteel manner which enhanced the value of the obligation, and taught the heart of the benefited person to beat with wishes for his happiness, and lift itself up in grateful prayers, for the preservation of a life, which, then in early youth, was likely to become so valuable to his fellow creatures.

CHAP. IV.

FASHIONABLE DEPRAVITY OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

It is said, that if one of these beautiful women were to spit in the sea, the waters thereof would be bitter no more.

ALCORAN OF MAHOMET.

A CHRISTIAN renegado, who had dwelt many years at Constantinople, after acquiring there immense wealth, obtained permission to quit the Turkish dominions. He repaired immediately to England, with his daughter, who was fair as one of the Houris of the Mussulman's Paradise, but whose figure was rather too *petite* to please the descendants of the prophet,

who are generally fond of majestic beauties; she, too, was permitted to depart in peace with her father. From a Circassian slave he had learned the art of distilling sweets of a most exquisite odour; and, on the death of the slave, the renegado was in possession of the inestimable secret of those compositions, and drew from thence the sources of his wealth.

The face of Elmira was very pretty, and her figure, though small, was elegant; nor was she less admired for the want of majestic height in England, where such a variety of tastes prevail. Crowds of lovers followed the young lady; and at length a worthy knight, disdaining the narrow idea of making objections to her birth, did her the honour of taking her as his wife.

This happy husband, Sir Bernard Fortescue, was a man of a very grave and

sedentary turn of mind, of great abilities, and as deeply learned as most men of those unpolished times. He loved Elmira, but he loved her without much passion, and yet as ardently as the coldness of his natural affection would allow : but he was to her an excellent husband, and a father the most tender to children, of whom there was every reason to doubt whether or no they were his own.

Elmira had received from a Circassian mother a true Turkish education, which taught her to look upon the attentions, and what is styled the love of men, as the *summum bonum* of human felicity. She had instructed her daughter, as she had been herself, to imagine her soul to be perishable ; Elmira therefore thought herself justified in making as much as possible of her pretty little body. Naturally voluptuous, she despised her husband

for his frigidity and frequent apathy; and, not long after her marriage, discovering (what she termed) the insensibility of his character, she fixed her affections on a friend of Sir Bernard's, who visited often at his house. He was not proof against her attractions and advances, and he might be truly said to bear an equal claim to the title of father to her offspring with Sir Bernard.

Let it be remembered that Elmira had been taught, that to appear charming in the eyes of man should be her chief study: she therefore gloried in that conduct, which suffuses the cheek of an English woman with blushes. Vain of her personal charms, but still more desirous of being the object of love, she affected to view, not in any illicit light, that inclination, which sensual man often feels for a forward female, and which, in reality, only

centres in self-gratification, terminating in disgust and contempt.

Yet her artifice and cunning rose superior to the blind education she had received in her native country. She was young enough when she arrived in England to catch and adopt the manners of the females; therefore not innocence, nor the force of tuition in her early years, but a natural inconstancy, and a love of sensuality, were the guides of her conduct. She had seen enough of the customs and behaviour of the English ladies, to know how, on occasion, to copy their manners, and, by artifice and pretended fondness, to deceive a husband whom she injured and despised; while her glaring infidelity was conspicuous to many of her domestics, and made a subject of dangerous confidence to those of her dependents, whose situation precluded remonstrance.

Over those females, whose virtuous and decorous behaviour kept men at a proper distance, she arrogantly claimed a superiority; deeming them unworthy that love she too incautiously boasted of inspiring.

Sir Thomas Vaughan, who was of a very amorous complexion, was greatly smitten with Lady Fortescue; but he would have liked her much better had she been taller. He was possessed of a large fortune, and was very fond of travelling; he was always wishing to visit every different clime and nation before he died, particularly to see the females of every country. Lady Fortescue had given him the most favourable impression of the Turkish beauties; and, though he was married to an attractive female, THAT, according to the depravity of the times, did not by any means bind his affections, for,

instead of devoting himself to one, he loved a multiplicity of women.

He repaired to the house of Elmira's father, and requested of him to know if all the Turkish beauties were as handsome as his daughter? The old man replied, that he was naturally partial to a child who was reckoned beautiful by all who beheld her, even with an indifferent eye; but that, in vending the article of perfumery, he had been introduced into the harem of the Grand Seignor, and those of the Turkish grandees, and he must say he saw many, ay, very many, who far surpassed his own little Elmira; their faces, their forms, so perfect, they appeared, even to his aged eyes, a combination of female beauty that the most luxuriant and voluptuous fancy could possibly conceive.

Sir Thomas, after this intelligence, took his leave, resolved, at least for a time, to quit England, where his licentious wishes had been satiated. He therefore made use of all his interest to enable him to visit the Turkish empire, and departed for that purpose in a few weeks after his interview with the father of Lady Fortescue.

The above lady still continued her dissipated career of gallantry, while her infatuated husband was the kindest of fathers to his nominal offspring:—the only constant attachment his Circassian wife seemed to experience was for that *friend*, who was entitled to the true claim of paternity to her children.

The conscience of Lady Fortescue never seemed to give her even a momentary pang: to sacrifice all to vanity, her predominant passion, appeared her sole aim;

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and while her person was lovely, and her youth and health in their prime, reflection, that impertinent guest, never intruded her troublesome presence. The stings of remorse and of an awakened conscience to that inherent sense of rectitude, implanted in every breast, reserved their corroding venom to a future day; that fated day, when depravity of conduct should excite disgust in her male followers, and when the rude hand of a premature old age had disfigured a countenance no longer fascinating; while those, who, in concurrence with her own light principles, had helped to extinguish each little sentiment of honour and virtue yet kindling in her bosom, would be among the first to quit her with contempt, and abandon her to that neglect her faded charms and want of morality must inevitably doom her to experience.

Perhaps had Lady Fortescue met with a husband, whose lively mind and ardent character had been more congenial with her own, she might, it is possible, have adorned that state which she disgraced. An apathetic man, united to a warm-hearted female, is of all matches the worst assorted; for if vanity, aided by the force of education, is deeply rooted in the breast of the wife, when she meets with an insidious libertine, who affects to love like her, with the same romantic fondness, she is that instant lost; and when once she has overstepped the bounds of honour and gratitude to a kind and indulgent husband, the smallest neglect on the part of her lover stimulates her to seek her revenge in the attainment of a new conquest; till, to use the words of the poet,

"Another and another still succeeds."

Sir Bernard Fortescue, poring over his

volumes in his study to store his head within, while my lady was employed in ornamenting it without, became the common theme of conversation, and the standing jest of the day for some time. Happily for him, during the short period this fancy lasted, it did not reach his ears; for he was deeply engaged in his library, under pretence of indisposition, visible to no one. He was profoundly turning over and investigating the pages of antiquity, to find out whether Cleopatra, at the time she affected to love Mark Anthony alone, did not endeavour to delude Herod the Great into an amorous correspondence with her! Had he consulted his lady, she could have proved to him the great possibility of such conduct in the queen of Egypt, by the similarity of her own.

CHAP. V.

ARTFUL POLITICS, AND FASHIONABLE FOLLY.

His demand
Springs not from well meant, honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity.

New customs,
Tho' they be ever so ridiculous,
Nay, let them be unmanly, yet are followed.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE Count of St. Pol had now secretly promised to unite himself with Louis and the Duke of Burgundy, against England. This weak count was easily made a tool by the artful Louis; though he gave little apprehension to the English, who knew

that at any time they were able, by sending over a small force, to crush the power of this weak ally of the French monarch, whose restless ambition was only laying plans the more and more to enslave the wretched Duke of Burgundy; to wrest even the shadow of dominion from him, and render him and his state dependent on the crown of France.

*The treacherous conduct of Louis XI. exemplified itself on every occasion; want of honour, and the breach of every treaty, formed the basis of his character; and yet he called himself Louis, *by the grace of God!* though he forbade Francis, Duke of Bretagne, to style himself *Francis, by the grace of God, Duke of Bretagne.*

†But this shameful, and more shame-

* See Mezerai's History of France. † Ibid.

fully broken, treaty with the Duke of Burgundy was most artful and atrocious; it was planned to ruin England, but, finding that plot failed, he diabolically made the duke the miserable sufferer, as if it was necessary he should have some victim for his insatiate cruelty.

All his acquisitions of power, however, could not prevent the pangs of a gnawing conscience; suspicion, terror, and distrust, were his constant attendants; he well knew his subjects detested him, and that fear alone made them subservient under the galling yoke he put upon them. Loaded with murders and treacherous villanies, he trembled with the daily horror of assassination, and he fancied every instant that some one was coming to wrest his sceptre from him. *He was accustomed, in this state of mind, to order his

* See Mezerai's History of France.

captains to search all who spoke to him, to see if they had arms concealed under their clothes. He never gave to the fair chance of war what he could obtain by treachery, money, or atrocity; and, during a campaign, the ungrateful wretch is said to have poisoned some of his own sick and wounded soldiers, in order, like Caligula, to rid the state of such useless citizens.

This regal monster was a compound of artifice and barbarity; well skilled in the art of politics, and endowed with those sort of intriguing qualities requisite to the success of a sanguinary tyrant.

Had not the ocean separated this country from him, he would most undoubtedly have conquered it, and united it to the kingdom of France; sure of the assistance of Margaret and her allies. But her power was so crushed after the battle of

Tewkesbury, that he had little to hope from one whom he intended only to make subservient to his interest, and then betray, like his unfortunate vassal, the Duke of Burgundy.

He saw no prospect of enslaving this island but through treachery, during a peace; and he now set every engine to work to procure it; and knowing the English parliament, at that time, was chiefly composed of the Lancastrian party, he resolved to negotiate with them for a peace, if it was possible to be attained.

In the mean time the artful De Commines was at work for his master. He did all in his power to flatter the pride and pleasures of Edward; to observe carefully on whatever favourite system he leaned, and, by his trusty emissaries, soothe his passions, while he penetrated his heart

with gratitude for the liberality of sentiment, and sincere affection, so visible in the conduct of a professed enemy. He beheld the aversion of the prince at binding himself by the ties of matrimonial affection to the Princess of Savoy; and carefully instructed one of his adherents to pay his court, as much as possible, to Edward, while he told him and others to avoid shewing much attention or civility to the princess, as that could not fail of offending Edward, during his present alienation of his regard to her. He desired his associates to remember, that he had a trusty female friend, who had been brought up with the princess, and whom he would invite over to Paris, renew his acquaintance with her, and, by some magnificent present bestowed on this treacherous woman, he thought to render the prince a service, by her calumniation of the prin-

cess, whereby Edward might for ever rid himself of one whom he dared not openly to refuse an alliance with; and whose virtue rose triumphant, in spite of all the artifice and malice of her enemies. For persecuted innocence will ever become the cause of the wise and the good; but the guilt of those who, for political intrigue, could calumniate an innocent female, deserved no palliation; who, to use a modern author's words, "nursed in the lap of superstition, and supported in splendid vice, attached to the princess's unsullied fame some of their own predominant vices; but when the depravation of morals had attained their climax, what could not be expected to ensue that was base and dishonourable?"

The Princess of Savoy had secretly embraced the reformed religion; and her chief associates were those prelates, of dig-

nified character, who, though they retained their sees under the present government, had inwardly thrown off the yoke of ignorance and superstition. Her other male associates and correspondents were a few of those wise and virtuous men who had composed the ministry of Edward's excellent father; and even this select society was made a pretext for the tongue of slander to disseminate its venom.

The frivolous age still continued its round of giddy pursuits; and the male part seemed ambitious of entering into all the amusements and employments of the populace. A gentleman driving his litter, or, indeed, not unusually his travelling cart, appeared to be a most favourite pursuit: and sometimes the young nobility would imitate the post that travelled from one country to another, and who blew an horn as he went along. So these giddy

young men would sometimes seat themselves on the fore horse of the litter, and blow the sound of their folly, as they passed through a town on an excursion of pleasure: and while they, by these means, lost that consequence due to their exalted rank, they still preserved that Gothic pride and insolence, when addressing a poor gentleman, or insulting a needy tradesman to whom they owed money, for which Englishmen are still so famous. Their love of fraternity and equality did not shew itself in kind conciliating behaviour to their inferiors, but only in rendering their imperious carriage still more disgusting, by the affected plainness of their dress, by the coarseness of language and manners they often adopted and copied from the lowest plebeians. With all their affected politeness and veneration for the manners of France, they were yet purse proud,

national Englishmen. To the weaker sex they daily became less and less the protectors. If they met a female who was not well dressed, they would laugh in her face; if beautiful, they laid a snare for her; and, if homely, it was well if she escaped insult from these haughty melogallic English, which composed the youth of England in those times of barbarism.

Lord Montague died about this period, leaving a will, the validity of which all his relations were anxious to set aside. His lordship had ever been a great lover of spectacles and public amusements. A young woman, of a good private character, had figured away in a pageant in a style which greatly pleased him; and, one evening, after being present at an exhibition of this kind, he went home, made his will in favour of the lady who had so frequently contributed to the pleasure

of his leisure hours, and died in a few months.

Having several poor relations, who had expectantly looked forward to his death as a means of ameliorating their narrow circumstances, they endeavoured to prove that Lord Montague was a lunatic; but the Duke of Suffolk, and several respectable lords and commoners, came forward and urged the sanity of his lordship's mind, the strength of his reason, and the known precision with which he had always acted. The will was therefore established, and the heroine of pageantry, which had so successfully acted her part, put in possession of her generous patron's bequest in her favour.

Another wonder also excited the attention of the nobility about the same time. The Earl of Willoughby, arrived at a very advanced age, had been many years a

widower. Just before his death, however, he declared himself to have been some time married. This gave deep concern to his family, and astonished his friends. The lady he had thus raised to honour and immense wealth, was a servant in his family; and she had long lived with the aged peer as his wife, without the forms the church requires to validate such a connexion. He acknowledged her, however, as his lawful wife, in one of those afflicting paroxysms of a severe and protracted illness, when reason appears to yield her sway to the pressure of excruciating pain. She hadbo rne him several children, one of which he averred to be legitimate. It was however found, on opening the will, that he had left her an handsome legacy, but not as his wife; and as she never claimed the title, the declaration was judged to be only the effect of

phrenzied fever in his lordship, whose nephew was put in possession of the earldom and hereditary fortune.

CHAP. VI.

THE DISSOLUTION OF A CORRUPT PARLIAMENT.

You tender more your person's honour than
Your high profession.————————

SHAKESPEARE.

MARGARET was now endeavouring, in concert with the artful Louis, to raise a force sufficient to oppose herself against Edward, and assert her rights to the British throne. Her schemes, however deep laid, were frustrated by the loyalty of the English to the interests of the house of York, and the loss of that esteem she had once enjoyed amongst her followers.

When adversity assaults, summer friends

rally round the standard of prosperity, and desert the cause of sad misfortune, let her plea be ever so just; but if doubtful, they easily investigate the claim of legitimate right, and the unhappy sufferer meets with total desertion.

Louis now attended to the advice of his prime minister, and began to be assiduous in his endeavours to make a peace with the English; as he found that Margaret had lost her popularity, and that Henry VI. still a prisoner in the Tower, was languishing under an incurable malady, the effects of a slow poison, or rather owing to the rigours of a close confinement.

The parliament at that time were chiefly composed of indolent and luxurious men, who desired peace; and who, in their hearts, wished well both to Louis and Queen Margaret. They therefore willingly

listened to the proposals of the French monarch, and Lord Fitzhugh was sent over to endeavour to negotiate a peace with him.

The English at that time were remarkable for the expence of their table; and we read in an old manuscript of the Northumberland family, that Lord and Lady Percy every morning sat down to breakfast at a table plentifully covered with fish and meat; and that there was allowed every morning for their beverage, at that meal, a quart of strong beer and a quart of wine. The sprightly French, who lived on ragouts, confections, and coffee, with a moderate portion of wine, and in general eat but sparingly, were in the constant habit of laughing at the English, for what they denominated gluttony; and Lord Fitzhugh, during the time employed in his negotiation, was subject

to all the sallies of wit, epigram, and punning, for which our Gallic neighbours are still so famous. Not contented with the exuberance of dainties which the plentiful country of France is so well able to afford, that one would imagine the most epicurean appetite could never be satiated; yet his lordship sent to England for a fish that was very rare, and of exquisite flavour, before he could invite the foreign ambassadors to dine with him.

But neither his costly treat of foreign fish, nor the friendship formerly subsisting between him and the artful De Commines, could bring any thing to a conclusion that was advantageous for England; and Lord Fitzhugh returned as he went, without succeeding in his mission for an honourable peace, and the war was carried on with fresh alacrity.

No prospect of a cessation of hostilities

abroad, the parliament, which was irregularly constituted, began to be divided against itself: an investigation took place amongst them; for during the last election, many false votes were found, and some knights and barons, it was declared, could not be legally chosen.

To prove how many of the Lancastrian party had obtained parliamentary power, which was but too often gained through the influence of the mob, all those who had ever been firmly attached to the York party were thrown out by the bribery of the partizans of Lancaster, who, not unfrequently, *purchased* their suffrages.

Amongst those who had been sincerely devoted to the Yorkists, and who had ever, till now, been supported in every public office, but were thrown out at that general election which composed the parliament after the death of Cobham, one

was Colonel Westmeath, the officer who had been the protector of the unfortunate Maria de Rosenvault, and a very near relation of the gallant and adored Earl of Pembroke: these, contrary to the expectation of their friends, lost their elections. The Colonel, seemingly secure of being chosen, knowing how many advocates he possessed, was careless and indifferent about exerting himself: some of those friends, however, in whose integrity he confided, were not proof against the bribery of his opponents; while others, attached to the cause of Lancaster, made use of their power and the licentious freedom permitted at elections, of triumphing over him, and unanimously choosing a man well known for his party principles in favour of Henry and Margaret; and who ha-

bited himself in deep mourning, though on the day he gained his election, in memory of the death of Warwick and Lovelace.

But so much was that parliament composed of Lancastrians, that money, though scattered in profusion, could do nothing, when employed by the Yorkists, to procure the suffrages of the different boroughs for which they became candidates. To the valiant Pembroke, for the support of his relation's cause, was sent the value of five thousand pounds of the present sterling money, from an unknown friend, beseeching him to use it on that account alone; as more should be sent him if that was not sufficient.

It is not by this to be supposed that the Yorkists condescended to employ any illegal bribery; but this friend,

knowing the munificence of Pembroke's heart, how sumptuously he ever regaled his friends, and to support the cause of this relation, whom he valued as himself, he would think no expence too great, to reward those who voted in his favour: the recital of this generous deed of disinterested friendship, made the health of Pembroke and his worthy friend circulate round the board with frequent and repeated enthusiasm; but those who supported the opponent of his beloved relative prevailed; and the lot of these two faithful adherents to the house of York, was similar to what befel the majority of that party in the other towns and counties which sent members to parliament.

Louis, enraged at the ill success of his negotiations, now declared that

he would actually force Great Britain to make a peace, and was determined by every means in his power to ruin its commerce :—he might, he said, be compared to Nero and other cruel emperors; he cared not for that; but that he was fully determined to humble England, and deal with her in a different manner to what she had hitherto been treated.

Edward's eyes were at length opened to the selfish conduct of those who had pretended only to be his support and that of the English government: the new ministry entirely lost his favour; the people were oppressed with new and heavy taxes, by those who had clamoured for the defence of their rights and privileges; a dissolution of parliament and change of ministry were now universally hoped for: since

it was evident that self-applause, personal pique, and disappointed ambition, seemed the chief springs which actuated their senatorial conduct, and that an eager grasping after wealth, title, and dignified places, were the only motives which regulated their actions.

The young Duke of Suffolk was become as odious to the people as his father had heretofore been. The world, as it became more enlightened, was less biassed than it had formerly been by the glare of splendour or the empty title of nobility, when unaccompanied by real worth: a* more high regard to law was evinced, and a more fixed authority enjoyed by parliament, than

* See Hume's History of England.

at any former period of English history.

* The Duke of Suffolk rose in the house of peers, and took notice of the clamors raised against him; and was proceeding by inflammatory letters, distributed amongst the populace and his confederates, to excite them to acts of open rebellion.

This irregularly constituted parliament were most of them bigoted men†, who had greatly relaxed their vigilance against the see of Rome; and the Papal dignity was making rapid strides to arbitrary power in England, had not the king, with firm and laudable resolution, declared, that no foreigner should be capable of church preferment. This,

* See Hume's History of England.

† See Rapin.

though reformation was not effected, fixed the church of England on her own basis; but was a severe blow to Lady Elizabeth and her party.

A dissolution of parliament soon followed, and a new ministry, firm friends to the interests of the house of York, were chosen in the place of those venal men, whose chief aim appeared to be directed to the erecting the house of Lancaster on the ruins of that of York.

CHAP. VII.

NOBILITY.

If you degenerate from your race,
Their merits heighten your disgrace.

GAY.

THOUGH vice and depravity of morals in a great measure predominated, yet England, nevertheless, could boast of many great and philanthropic characters: the foundation of several public charities, of the most laudable nature, were planned in this reign, and youth and unprotected innocence often found an asylum under the habitation, and the peculiar patronage of some of the virtuous nobility.

This kindness sometimes met with the warmest and most affectionate returns of gratitude; but an instance occurred of a young lady, who had been reared and educated in the family of a respectable nobleman, and had arrived, through his munificence, to the attainment of all the elegant accomplishments: when, at the age of sixteen, she quitted her benefactors, to elope with a needy gentleman, above forty years of age.

The family she quitted, and to whom she was become dear as a daughter, were cruelly alarmed, when they found she was missing; every enquiry was made after her, for some time, but without success; till at length it was found that she and her lover had escaped to the north, and that they had put themselves out of the reach of

further pursuit, by placing themselves under the protection of the king of Scotland.

As all good intentions are liable to abuse, the seeming protection of innocence was, however, but too often made a pretext, by the titled dotard to betray it: small elegant houses and detached wings of old castles have been fitted up, from pretended motives of generosity and charity, to carry on intrigue, or favour the worst designs against unsuspecting beauty and gratitude.

An old nobleman, on the verge of seventy, has been known to repair to his castle in the country, where he passed the greatest part of his time, and has corrupted, during his abode there, by his presents and example, all the peasantry in his vicinity; particu-

larly the females; while, to purchase the freedom of boroughs, and obtain parliamentary support, he would entertain continually at his table, and familiarize himself with his freeholders, though they might be hair-cutters, beard-trimmers, blacksmiths, and butchers. Often low in their amours, the nobility would sometimes degrade themselves beneath their vassals, and lose that respect due to them, from the female part of their menials, which they appeared entirely to disregard by the unbounded and licentious familiarity they observed in their behaviour towards them.

Lord Dacres, young and gay, married for a second wife, a sprightly woman of high fashion and family; the acknowledged favourite of the Duchess of York. Blind to the charms of polite-

ness and elegance, his lordship preferred the company of the lowest maid servant in his mansion to that of his lady: being a woman of great spirit, she refused to succeed to them in her husband's affections; and, wishing to shun eclat with the world, on such an occasion, she made her lord consent that, though they resided under the same roof, they should live as strangers. Accordingly, when they found it requisite to have any thing to say to each other, concerning business or receiving the visits of their friends, a polite letter passed between them, and they continued that plan of living, for several years; while my lord, free as air, would mount an elegant carriage, a kind of open car, and, seated between two nymphs of the kitchen, would ride triumphant through the towns and

villages, to set decorum and respectability at defiance.

How unlike the conduct of the above-mentioned nobleman, was that which had ever been observed by their truly noble neighbour, the venerable Earl of Salisbury! living with the beloved wife he had from his youth, a lovely antique relick of superior beauty, like himself, the happiness of a numerous progeny, and that of his children's children, was his chief object and delight. To procure them wealth and honour, to enrich and preserve them in their high situation, by well assorted marriages, he would divest himself of many luxuries, to fill their coffers; so that if a father, with whom he wished to form an alliance, should imagine that Lord Salisbury's son had not sufficient wealth to marry his

daughter, on investigation he would find that he had abundance, and that the want of money would be no bar to his union. The true friend of his king and country, he loved the name of a soldier, and endeavoured, by every means in his power, to promote the welfare of those brave men, who had fought and bled in defence of their lawful sovereign. Such men exalt the noble race from whence they spring; while the trifling dissipated train of those who revel in titled insolence, only blight and wither those honours which were bestowed on their ancestors, as the reward of superior merit. What a pity it is that virtue cannot be as hereditary as nobility! Had the first institutor of those honours but enjoined, that the son should not inherit if his merit fell short of that of his father, then, with

what emulation would the sons of our nobles endeavour to obtain that pre-eminence in courage, and every other good quality, which rendered their fathers great; then, indeed, might we justly exclaim, "Virtue alone is true nobility!"

CHAP. VIII.

A LETTER.

" Our good qualities, more than our errors, expose us to persecution.

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

BLANCHE of Bretagne was a relation of the Princess of Savoy, and an enthusiastic admirer of her virtues. She was oneof those rare examples we sometimes see, of female friendship rising superior to vain and established customs, and braving every danger for the sake of her friend. She had attempted following the princess in disguise; was detected, and, by tyrannical parents, put in close confinement; but

neither their threats, nor the absence of her cousin, could eradicate the remembrance of the heartfelt and sincere affection she bore her; and, finding it impossible for her to enjoy the endearing society of that relative, for whom she entertained the highest reverence as well as love, she conveyed to her a letter, by means of a trusty friend, who acquainted her with all the transactions which were passing at the court of Edward. This letter was an exhortation to the princess to render her cause public, and of which the following is a correct translation.

" AMIABLE, RESPECTED, AND INJURED PRINCESS,

" WHILE innumerable pens are employed in addressing your royal husband, for such he certainly is, by all the laws of nations, from the time that

Warwick arrived at your court as ambassador, to demand you in marriage; while every true British breast, feeling how solemnly Edward has bound himself to you, by those ties he now refuses to ratify; those hearts are warmly interested in support of your claims, and ardent in the cause of injured innocence and suffering virtue: while the English nation, as one body, breathe the sense of your wrongs, and the lips of truth are vermilioned with your praise; while every eye is turned towards you, and every hand indignantly raised, to crush your accusers; why does the condescending forbearance of your highness withhold that PUBLIC EXPOSITION, by which the foul conspirators may meet the punishment due to their iniquitous designs? Your highness is aware, that there are situations, in

which particular circumstances place us; when the inflexibility of certain virtues become disadvantageous, and almost reprehensible. Thus the qualities of patience and forbearance (however estimable in themselves) are no longer virtues, when they afford shelter to the ungrateful hypocrite, or screen from public odium the *daring slanderer* of our fame and honour: for though it is an acknowledged truth, that the malignant calumniator, like a noxious insect, will select for prey the *fairest fruit*, yet if, with the means in our power, we expose not the spoiler, we shall doubtless suffer from it's venom.

Within the bounds of a very short period of time, considerable interest has been awakened in the public mind, from the expectancy of that explanation, long looked for by the people of Eng-

land. It is due to the virtue and dignity of your highness, to make public the testimonies, which shall confirm the general persuasion entertained by that nation in your favour. It is due to that nation, that the enemies of their admired princess, be brought to public shame. It is due to the future QUEEN OF ENGLAND, that she be restored, at least, to those public honours, which, (by that title) and her just prerogative, through intrigue and cruelty, have denied her those private rights which, her relative situation and individual merit entirely command. The domestic misfortunes of my illustrious princess, and dearly beloved cousin, have been felt by the English nation at large; and the interest they have created has been strengthened by the amiability of her conduct, and the patient

fortitude with which she has endured them. It is now awakened to a more lively sense of her wrongs, and urges NO SECRET COMMITTEE, NO DELICATE ENQUIRY, but that public justice may assert its claims, in defence of unsullied royalty, and in the punishment of the guilty defamer. In this address, that I have the honour of presenting to your highness, will be found the sentiments of the English nation, as well as the tender solicitude of an individual; —of Britons, who are famed for being jealous of their privileges, who look to the vindication of your claims in the present instance, as a pledge of that future justice and reparation, which the laws of England promise to their wives and daughters. For how shall an aspersed subject dare to look for retribution, while a doubt is permitted to rest on so ami-

able and illustrious a personage as their FUTURE QUEEN? The humanity and condescension of your highness, your benevolence, patience, and fortitude, under the severest domestic trials, have, by gaining you the love and interest of the nation, swelled the rancorous breasts of your enemies with a jealous hatred; for good qualities, like great abilities, are ever deprecated by such as are destitute of them. The pleasure it has afforded me in contemplating, though at a distance, the superior conduct of your highness, in a situation, and under circumstances so peculiarly distressing to a mind like your's, induces me to wish, that no persuasions of a private nature may induce you to withhold from the public that vindication it has been so anxiously expecting. The nation asks it

not for individual satisfaction; the virtuous retirement and prudent simplicity of your highness's life, which has been exercised in the purest pursuits, and found active in the cause of humanity, is a full and sufficient testimony. But the dignity of the FUTURE QUEEN OF ENGLAND, must not suffer in a moral or political sense; lenity to her persecutors is injustice to herself; and silence, in the present instance, will probably be construed by her enemies into an acknowledgement of an inefficient evidence. Let not therefore, amiable and injured princess, a matter so pregnant with consequences be left to stagnate: let not the serpent in ambush preserve its sting: stand forth as the defender of your own honour, and receive the support of a nation zealously attached to your cause.

I shall not sully this address by detailing the crimes of those ingrates, who have conspired against the peace and honour of your highness: they are too well known to need illustration from my pen, and your cause too just to be disgraced by invective. The bright example your highness has given of your amiable philanthropy, ingenuity, and talents, must not be tarnished: the tongue of the slanderer must not sully the prospect of your future greatness. In your rural retirement administering relief to orphan distress, cheering by your condescension, and enlivening by social converse; what is there reprehensible that can dwell in such a breast? Your highness has endured domestic affliction in its most acute and persevering form; and, with a resignation and magnanimity, which has en-

deared you to the hearts of your future subjects. The taste and ingenuity, the chaste simplicity of your occupations, have been long the subject of admiration and panegyric: and shall the factious cabals of intrigue and treachery, the envenomed dart of malice and detraction, which have so severely wounded all your prospects of domestic felicity, still continue its aim? Must the bright emanations of promised glory be dimmed by the noxious breath of jealousy and envy? and that sun be permitted to set in darkness, whose brilliancy would illuminate the kingdom of England? Oh! forbid it, generous Britons! forbid it justice, forbid it policy! The report has gone abroad, its rumours have reached every ear, and have touched the hearts of the people: they call loudly for that eluci-

dation, which shall proclaim to distant ages the virtue of the Princess of Savoy, and the infamy of her accusers. When a subject of such importance has been publicly promulgated and disseminated to distant kingdoms, it becomes a political and moral duty, not only as it relates to individual honour, but to the credit of England and the peace and permanence of national alliances, by the observance of solemn treaties, that a most clear and unequivocal statement should be given. The bright, intellectual powers, with which your highness is endowed, glancing into futurity, will doubtless take a retrospective view of what is *certainly possible!* I dare not be more explicit; I would not alarm delicacy, I would only awaken to a sense of danger! Enemies so confessedly daring, if per-

mitted to roam at large, unpunished, and unrestrained, will triumph in acts of insubordination, or wait in ambush, till a more favourable opportunity offers, for effecting their insidious designs. Give, then, amiable and injured princess, give your enemies to the people of England, who will testify their sense of your wrongs and their reverence of your virtues, by branding them with public scorn: thus will you secure the future peace of the state, and rescue your fame from the hands of the spoiler. Your highness must remember, with satisfaction, the circumstance I am about to record, as it exhibits a striking instance of the love of the English towards you. No long time since, it was generally believed that your highness was to make one in the royal suite on a late public occasion;

and the populace, eager to testify their loyalty and attachment, on seeing, what they supposed, the equipage of your highness, followed it, with every demonstration of an heartfelt and lively joy; and were proceeding to take the horses from the carriage, in order themselves to conduct their future queen to her destination; when the equipage stopped! and out of it stepped A PERSONAGE! not the PRINCESS OF SAVOY —not THE CHOSEN QUEEN OF ENGLAND! and the people, finding their mistake, and mortified at their disappointment, signified their dissatisfaction by reiterated hissings. I could produce many other instances of that veneration and love, and of that sympathy in your highness's cause, together with that utter detestation which the nation you are formed to adorn,

feels towards those ungrateful and insidious subjects, who basked in the smile, and glittered by the rays of that condescension which they have so basely abused. I am justified in stating to your highness, that the people of England will not rest satisfied, unless these daring incendiaries be brought to public justice; and their amiable princess receives that public acquittal and retribution, which the most humble subject may claim from the constitution of the realm. The present situation of political affairs must point out to your highness, the necessity of establishing your rights on the most firm and solid grounds: while the nation is left in it's present uncertainty, and the enemies of it's future queen are allowed to plot and promulgate their foul calumnies in the face of day, what a wide space is

left open, not only for innovations, but for the disclaimants of royal authority, the revival of those disputes of hereditary possessions, for the violation of national rights, and the introduction of anarchy, with all it's host of evils! Is the feudal dignity no more? that wisely separating quality, which has heretofore regulated the order of old Albion's sons! Where, now, is the majesty of princes, and the duly organized decorum of the subject? Where that observance of religious and moral obligation, which gives substance and sanctity to our several stations? Where the nice sense of honour, that binds irrevocably the solemnly betrothed husband? Are the all-powerful emotions, which are unavoidably excited by beauty and virtue united, expiring on the lap of indolence, or silenced by the

specious influence of party intrigue? Shall the hand that signs a solemn treaty refuse to ratify? and shall the husband countenance his own dishonour, by remaining silent or indifferent to the injuries of his wife? Would those dastardly assassins, Sir Douglas Malcolm, and his ungrateful and audacious wife, have dared so foul a charge, if the royal and (him who ought to have been) the natural protector of the person and fame of the illustrious Bona, had stood forth as her champion? Malice and disappointed ambition, pride and ingratitude, would not then have sought such an infamous revenge for the necessary check given to their presumption and insubordinate freedom. No one is better acquainted with the female character than Edward the Fourth: he cannot, for a moment, cre-

dit the vile aspersions: he well knows, that a woman who gives herself up to irregular habits, or unlicensed connexions, possesses not that refinement in her avocations, that unobtrusive retired grace of deportment, or that well-regulated humanity, which has ever distinguished your highness. In her secluded retirement, with the means of forming an extensive acquaintance, and partaking of all the gaiety and splendour of high life, we see her selecting a chosen few. We see her not exhibiting herself at pageants and tournaments, nor any place of public resort, although sure of being greeted with the cordial and heartfelt salutation of an admiring multitude. We see her not forming parties, or entering into political cabals, against the authors of her

domestic affliction. She courts not popularity; but, with patient magnanimity, and pliant fortitude, bends, like the willow, to the fury of the storm. We see her, like our first mother, cultivating the earth, and endeavouring (to use her own native expression) to acquire the honourable name of *farmer!* Here, she produces the fragrant flower and shrub; there, more at large, the useful vegetable: "this latter article is carried to town, and with the sum they produce, she educates ten poor children:" these favoured offspring of indigence are boarded in her neighbourhood, and the amiable PRINCESS OF SAVOY, the destined QUEEN OF ENGLAND, not only directs their education, but investigates their personal comforts; and attends with a solicitude, almost maternal, to

their health, their moral and religious instruction. Let me now ask any one, whether philosopher, saint, or sage, is this the woman likely to commit a moral impropriety? Not one of them but must answer, in the language of sacred writ, "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither an evil tree good: *by their fruit ye shall know them!*" What are the fruits, or, which is the same in the sense, what are the actions, what has been the conduct of the Princess of Savoy, under trials the most severe? Affianced, wedded by the most sacred treaties, then abandoned, and a widowed wife! Lovely in person, in the flower of her age, and with a heart un-attached; for what female of delicacy or sentiment, can long be devoted to an object, who not only treats her

with insulting indifference, but abandons her for those, who are every way inferior, and palpably reprehensible. Under such circumstances, to which are added the miseries of war, what has been the conduct of the Princess of Savoy? Oh! may this testimony of her worth be recorded to distant ages; and then, Reader, whoever you may be, do justice to her magnanimity, amiability, and worth.

If I should have extended this subject beyond the usual length of an address of this nature; if, impressed with a sense of your highness's situation on the *present occasion*, I should have dwelt too forcibly on the necessity of a *public explanation;* indignation towards your enemies, and veneration for your virtues, sympathy in your injuries,

and affection for your person, will, I trust, plead an excuse for

Your highness's

Most devoted and faithful

BLANCHE DE BRETAGNE."

CHAP. IX.

DELIGHTS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

* Il est bon general, il
Est sans negligence;
Il est sans nez—Sans nez—
Sans nez—Il est sans
Negligence—Sans nez.
Il est sans negligence.
(Chansons, sur les victoires de M. Roquelaire.)

SIR Thomas Vaughan, on his arrival at Constantinople, was cruelly dis-

* M. de Roquelaire was remarkable for the smallness of his nose; the reader, however trifling his knowledge of the French language may be, will easily see the satire of the repetition of "*Il est sans nez!*" which, though not perfectly correct in the spelling, possesses some point; which it would entirely lose by a translation.

appointed, in finding the women of that country so secluded from the public view; but, being invested with a special mission from his royal master to the grand seignior, and possessing an uncommon degree of impudence, in the course of conversation with the prophet's vice-gerent, he said, there was nothing he had so much at heart, no desire so strong, as that which he felt to behold the beauties that composed the royal seraglio. The Turk felt some repugnance, at first, to admit a man into this *sanctum sanctorum*, consecrated to himself alone: but, being a very handsome man, and perceiving a disagreeable, emaciated appearance in the amorous knight, he at length, after many petitions he received from him, (supplicating his royal consent) reluctantly complied.

An ugly man in love, is said to appear still more hideous, when he endeavours, by expressive looks, to appear most amiable; and it may be said of Sir Thomas, what Le Sage says of an old Spanish gallant, which he celebrated, that, when he cast around his amorous glances, "he looked like a wretch in his last agonies."

The Sultana and the ladies who composed her train, were ready to expire with laughter at the havock, love and desire made on his features: the snowy teeth they displayed, the brilliancy of their fine black eyes, during this scene of mirth, greatly added to their personal attractions; and the knight quitted this enchanting scene, enamoured with them all. The Sultana entreated her lord, to suffer them to be often amused with this grotesque figure. "It

would afford me," said she, "the highest diversion to pretend to fall in love with him." The sultan, however, told her, she must not demean herself so far as that; but that he had no objection to their amusing themselves with him, in any mischievous way they pleased; for he could never be jealous of one, who, in every respect, was so very inferior to himself.

Fetnah, a droll girl, whose unbounded merriment had often alleviated many a careful hour of her lord and master; whose sportive sallies of wit and humour had frequently extorted a laugh from him, even when war and rebellion had severely shaken his throne, said to him, "Oh! my lord, by all your hopes of paradise hereafter, do indulge your slave in a request she is about to make to you. No dishonour

shall be attached to any part of the seraglio; because, when my plot succeeds, I will discover all, and then expose the vain and presumptuous Christian: but do, my lord, suffer some of your chief ladies to affect to be in love with him; and then I will completely punish his arrogance and vanity, for daring to aspire to those beauties, whom your majesty graciously condescends to honour with your notice.", "Go on, Fetnah," said the grand seignior, unable to keep his countenance at the mirthful archness of her varying face; so full of her plot, that her expressive eyes discovered all she was about to utter. She then continued, collecting all the seriousness she possibly could, into her visible visage. "Your majesty knows there is an old christian slave, who had long been in

the seraglio of the mighty monarch, your father: on whom, when the bright sun of your majesty illumined the throne, you was pleased to settle an handsome allowance, with full liberty to her, to chuse the place of her future dwelling. Avaricious to a degree, her sole delight was to keep up wealth, and to acquire it by any means. At a short distance from Constantinople, she purchased an house and gardens: she filled her house with beautiful girls, and, with their company, she regaled Mahometans, Jew merchants, and Christians. This conduct, however, lost her the favour of all her Christian friends of any respectability; and, it is said, she has now embraced the Mahometan faith. She still goes on with her traffic of female beauty, but they are now a bad

abandoned set of girls, consisting chiefly of the children of the very lowest and worst sort of Jews, and of very vile Christians. Now, I want to tell this queer English Christian, whom I never can think on without laughing, that the house where old Isidore resides, is a country house, belonging to your majesty, where you keep a number of beautiful virgins, of the most illustrious birth; that of these enchanting Houris, fit only for Mahomet's paradise, one had seen his lovely person, through a small interstice in the apartment, where you did him the honour of first receiving him: she shall say, that she is certain of never experiencing joy or happiness again, unless her love is returned by this adorable Englishman."

"But how shall we contrive all this?" said the smiling sultan, who

began to relish the plot. "Leave that to me," said Fetnah. "Only permit your slave this once to have her will, and I could almost promise never to request any thing again."

The sultan nodded his head; and the artful girl began her operations. She first caused letters to be written to Sir Thomas, in the most passionate style, by a young christian girl of old Isidore's; and who, being the daughter of an English renegado, was well acquainted with that language; for which she gave as a reason, that it was owing to the extensive education she received from the particular favour of the sultan; who, she daily expected, would elevate her to the dignity of Sultana.

This girl, though extremely pretty, was one of the most licentious and depraved of the whole set. Sir Thomas

no sooner beheld her, than he became immediately enamoured of her, especially experiencing the strong illusion that she was the chosen favourite of the grand seignior.

The girls were all uncommonly handsome, and the knight already fancied himself in the paradise promised to all true mussulmen believers: but, alas! the event shewed but too plainly, that his felicity was most mortifyingly earthly! Delicacy forbids the pen to dwell on the diseased and wretched state of Sir Thomas: suffice it to say, that the pride of his face sunk level with his cheeks; in fact, he returned to England, *sans nez!*

The mischievous Fetnah now triumphed; she exposed the poor English

christian, adding the keenest ridicule on his increased ugliness. Vexed to the soul, and most cruelly disappointed in his embassy to this court of Cytherea, the mortified knight petitioned for his dismission, obtained it, and returned to his native country.

In the mean time, the neglected lady Vaughan had been assailed in his absence with that dangerous attention, which, refinement and accomplishments knew so well how to pay, and lead captive an heart naturally warm, which, so far from being filled with one object, feels disgust, amounting to hatred, for continual ill usage, neglect, and repeated infidelities. The knight, her husband, had been in Turkey; he there found woman the wretched slave of arbitrary man: that precious gift of heaven, an immortal soul, de-

nied her. But is it, or rather ought it to be so, in a land which boasts of its liberality, where the Salique law is not permitted even to exist? We affect to abjure Turkish principles, but in fact we cherish them; and, whatever freedom is pretended to be accorded to woman, she is yet amenable, in the severest degree, to those laws, which man, who formed them, daily and hourly transgresses. The prey of disease, with a mutilated visage, we here find an adulterer, of the grossest kind, alledging his plea, in a court of justice, against that wife, whom he had not only shamefully neglected, but whose health had suffered, and whose life might have ran a fatal risque through his licentiousness.

Had that sex, men call frail, more

reliance placed on her honour, she would not so frequently abuse it. The female mind, so often the seat of sentiment, the most romantic, would suffer every species of self-denial, before it would break through that illusive system, which mentally promises them tranquillity and happiness.

The arbitrary laws above-cited, are not peculiar to the fifteenth century; they still hold unlimited sway. The generous Colonel H*****, had it in contemplation, if he ever obtained a place in the English senate, to propose an amelioration of our laws, as far as they related, to use his own words, "to weak and oppressed woman." Why does not some liberal-minded senator, in a land that triumphs in its freedom, step forward and obtain for

them a small portion of those rights, which reasonable beings demand, and which tyrant man usurps, and appropriates solely to himself?

CHAP. X.

AMBITION AND DISAPPOINTED LOVE.

No more my King, for he dishonours me.

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING his exile from England, the heir to the house of York visited a part of Germany. His heart, ever susceptible to tender impressions, there formed an attachment with the wife of a Jew; the produce of which amour gave a severe shock and great alarm to the kingdom, during the reign of Henry VII.

Renehldena Warbeck, a Dane by birth, had captivated the heart of Baron Williamstadt, a noble German;

who, perceiving in her young mind an aptitude for learning, had instructed her in all the elegancies of his language, which he enabled her to speak, not only with precision, but she could even declaim in it with expression and theatrical skill.

To all the virtue, constancy, and fortitude, inherent in a German character, Williamstadt united that high sense of dignity, and proper pride, which shrink from levelling systems; while, with the weaker sex, that pride seemed banished, and respect and gentleness ever sat on his lips, when addressing a female. His exterior, though more than agreeable, was not correctly handsome; yet it possessed a fascination, that, when it makes an impression, pleases more than beauty. For his expressive eyes ever spoke the feelings of

his mind; who, while they sometimes rested on the form and face of Renehldena with delight, yet he had no intention of raising her to that dignity, the lowliness of her birth denied her, --the dignity of being the lawful wife of Baron Williamstadt.

To trifle with an unsuspecting heart, is very wrong; but where is the character free from error? Woman, but too often, and too easily believes the protestations, and perhaps the attentions, only of man, to be the effects of a serious and honourable attachment: while little more than self is comprised in the love they profess for the credulous female, who trusts to their apparent sincerity.

Deceived in her expectations, finding the baron had given his hand to another, in a rash moment she

revenged, what she imagined, the perfidy of Williamstadt on herself: she listened to the addresses of the old and wealthy Jew, Warbeck, and became his wife.

Her distracted mind underwent a total change from the privation of his affection, for whom she had cherished the fondest regard; and now, the eyes of York's powerful heir, ever on the search after new objects, fixed themselves on Mrs. Warbeck, as his destined victim; for she appeared to him by far the handsomest woman he had seen in his travels.

That the object of his choice was married, he considered as no impediment. His illustrious birth, his riches, his undisputed and unrivalled beauty, made him imagine himself irresistible to all women, especially to one married,

in a moment of pique and rashness, to a disagreeable, avaricious, old husband: the pride of jealousy yet rankling in her youthful breast, and all its feelings actuated by the wish of planting a thorn in the bosom of Williamstadt.

The natural levity of her mind, by degrees wore off the tender impression of his remembrance; but she felt a void in her heart, which was naturally prone to soft emotions. This void was far more distressing to her active spirit, than either the violence of her anger, or the sadness of her regret. Even the sorrows of love have their charms! the soft and silent tear that falls for an object irretrievably lost, and yet deeply lamented, is accompanied with a thrill of luxuriant woe, known only to those who have truly loved. Indulgent memory delights to dwell on each past

scene; and, while it embellishes every hour of felicity, sees in idea the beloved idol of its affections, ever kind, ever young and charming, as in those happy moments, when his thoughts, his wishes, seemed to concentrate in one alone. When cold and death-like apathy succeeds to this state of soft sorrow, the benumbed soul becomes insensible to pleasure; or else, naturally warm and affectionate, it owns another love,—less lasting, more violent, but which often ends in bitter remorse.

Such was the situation of Renehldena. The regard she had experienced for the baron, had in it something of virtue; for it was his mind chiefly that she adored! Deprived of his converse, she flew to dissipation for relief. This helped to render her heart, in some degree, callous to the remembrance of

him. Frequenting every public place of amusement, she constantly beheld Edward at those gay scenes, and received from him those seducing attentions, which he so well knew how to pay, especially when he had any favourite scheme to pursue.

Few women could behold, at that period of his life, this accomplished Prince with indifference; and Mrs. Warbeck, accustomed to see him continually, and to receive his homage, his presence and conversation, at length, became requisite to her happiness. He negotiated his pecuniary affairs with the Jew, her husband, who found the Englishman so generous, so apparently unsuspecting, and so easily imposed upon, that he welcomed him ever with delight, offered him his house, his table, every thing but

what the Prince most wanted,—his wife!

It can hardly be said, that the rights of hospitality were abused, for the Jew made the Earl of March pay dear for his prize. Usury, unheard of, before was practised, and poor Edward's finances were almost exhausted. The art of each culpable offender was put in force against his fellow; and now the affairs of the house of York being likely to succeed at home, the acknowledged heir quitted the house of the Jew, in disguise; having become, every way, a considerable debtor to him, but left him, in return, an heir to his immense riches.

A premature delivery, at this sudden and cruel neglect, was the consequence to Renehldena. She made a confidant of her nurse, and told her who was the real father of her offspring; who, not-

withstanding his being hastened into the world, was a fine healthy looking infant.

"Blessed be heaven," said Renehldena with energy, "my child is not a daughter; fatal, ah! how often fatal to a woman are personal attractions! The smooth tongued Williamstadt wedded another, because birth and fortune added not their charms to my unfortunate beauty: but why do I mention him? I have now rendered myself totally unworthy of him; and how am I requited? the barbarous heir to the throne of England thinks it not beneath him to deprive my husband of his money and his honour, and then leave the wretched victim of his passion and inconstancy a prey to the severest mental anguish. He heeds not her feelings, nor thinks of his offspring more than a monster. Alas! not so much;

the most savage and ferocious love their young ones. Oh! once how lavish of his vows, his gifts of fortune, was the perfidious Edward! and for what? to ruin an helpless woman's peace, trample over every remaining principle of virtue she had imbibed, and then cruelly abandon her. Oh! my son, she frantickly added, raising him in her arms, I dedicate thee to an eternal enmity with the throne of England, until thou shalt attain it for thyself: it belongs to thee, thou living image of thy unkind father; it is thine by all the rights of injured woman! The first words thy little lips shall be taught to utter, shall be to breathe that sacred vow, which shall solemnly swear, that thou wilt ascend the English throne! Whatever tyrant, whatever unfeeling wretch may fill it, du-

ring thy season of ardent youth or ripened manhood, thou shalt pledge thyself before that sacred altar, the presence of maternal love, to hurl him from it! Thy mother is a Dane! the spirit of my forefathers, who were murdered by the cruel Britons, seems to animate my bosom, and inspire me to deeds of revenge."

The frantic Renehildena, exhausted with the conflict of passion and desperation, fainted away; her life was for some time despaired of, but, by slow degrees, she recovered. Her bloom faded, her beauty almost gone, her thoughts were bent alone on confirming the solemn vow she had taken, and giving her son those instructions, she had firmly resolved on. Left a widow, soon after his birth, she was at full liberty to disclose to him his royal father. As he grew up, she

stimulated his mind to every act of rebellion against the crown of Great Britain. The feeling and tender hearted Williamstadt mourned her enthusiastic folly, but detested her principles of revenge: a true and loyal protector of kingly power, he helped to crush the aspiring hopes, and all the deep laid plots of this treacherous Dane. The reader, in the perusal of English history, will see the great mischief occasioned by Perkin Warbeck, (the son of Edward and Renehldena), during a part of the reign of Henry VII.

Surely the liberal mind must remark, how much this enthusiastic female was the victim of man! Whatever virtue he possesses, whatever noble principles, yet woman, through him, becomes a sufferer. Williamstadt, with all his loyalty, with all his steady principles,

scrupled not to beguile the mind of a young innocent female, whom rigid honour and cold-hearted pride prompted him to leave, when her every look and action must have proved to him how deeply he had interested her affections. He was her first attachment, and to a philosophic plan of rectitude he had adopted, which bound him to a strict observance of worldly rules, and often checked that benevolent sense, so feelingly alive in his heart to all the softer sentiments; to this system, more than to himself, she might perhaps date her fall from virtue, and her adoption of revengeful passion.

At first, she appeared desirous of naming her beloved boy after her first and only real love; but, instantly checking herself, she mentally uttered—

Why, oh why should I preserve the least degree of affection for one who has for ever deserted me, who thinks of me no longer? Hence, from this bosom every spark of soft emotion! let me think of him, let me hear his name pronounced, with the same chill indifference that freezes his own icy bosom! Neither shall my child bear the name of Edward; that must remind me of my transitory happiness, and his unexampled cruelty: no, let him bear the name of his nominal injured father; and while it recals to my memory that I am a guilty wretch, let him who made me so, one day feel my vengeance.*

* Spelman and other ancient writers of English history, say that Perkin Warbeck was supposed to be the son of Edward IV. by the wife of a Jew, he met with during his exile.

CHAP. XI.

TREACHERY AND CRUELTY INIMICAL TO PEACE.

Le charme voluptueux de tirer les hommes de l'infortune; ne se fit jamais sentir à ton coeur. tu n'entendis jamais apres tes victoires, un peuple, enivre de joie, t'appeller le doux nom de pere.

LA CROIX.

That delicious charm of delivering mankind from misfortune thine heart has never experienced: never hast thou heard after thy victories, a people, transported with joy, calling thee by the endearing name of father.

ENGLAND, though now secure from all successful attacks of the Lancastrian party, who began to be efficiently crushed, was yet labouring under all the inconvenience of an heavily expensive war; but resolved, if possible, to humble France, and the English, almost to a man, appeared very little

to wish for a peace, which they knew must be dishonourable for their own country, and only afford means to the ambitious ruler of France to carry on all his projects against this nation with success.

The Lancastrians, aided by a factious cabal in the house of commons, instigated their own native county, and the northern provinces adjoining, earnestly to petition the king for a peace: urging the distresses of their families, ruined by so long a war. They set forth the destruction of the trade and manufactures of the country, and represented all the horrors of numerous families of artisans perishing for want, when deprived of the resources of commerce. The ministry, however, firm and unshaken by these insidious attacks, continued to arm against the foe

with increased alacrity: expeditions of considerable force were fitted out, to protect and defend the country, and the king gave his royal sanction in the most determined manner, to continue the war against France.

Louis found he had internal enemies also in his own dominions. His tyranny and oppression rendered him the object of each man's detestation.* Passionate, to a degree of frenzy, his courtiers dared not take courage to address him; but his prime minister and confidant ventured to tell him, how requisite, and indeed, how important it was to him to endeavour by every means to accomplish a peace with the English, at that momentous crisis, which threatened a rebellion at home. "You will be the death of me, one day," answered

* See Mezerai's History of France.

Louis, " by teazing me to make peace with England. Can I force those proud islanders to a peace, whether they will or no? leave me alone; I have for ever crushed the Duke of Burgundy: say, was it gasconade, when I told him, by his late alliance with England, he would be conquered? Francis, Duke of Bretagne, is now my subjected vassal; and while I thus secure power on the continent, why need I regard the threats of England?" " But your commerce," said the wary minister. " Talk not to me of commerce," replied Louis, " go tell the archbishop of Paris, to order a general thanksgiving in all the churches for the success of my plans over poor humbled Burgundy and imbecile Bretagne." This sanguinary and barbarous tyrant was addicted to all the superstitious mummeries of the

Romish Religion. Amidst all the horrors of his merciless oppressions, he always wore in his hat an image of the virgin, cast in lead. This he constantly invoked on every occasion; and, after he had conquered, either by treachery, force, or money, his usual assistants,—he would assist at a *Te Deum*, in honour of his victory, dressed in a robe covered with *fleurs de lis*, as if he was one of the most pious princes, that had ever worn that honourable badge of Gallic royalty.

Edward, during his father's life-time, and in his own early youth, had visited the kingdom of France in the disguise of a civilian, accompanied by a young priest, who was firmly attached to the claims of the house of Lancaster; for such, both in his boyish days, and in maturer age, were generally the

chosen companions of him, who, from the house of York, was destined to fill the throne of England.

When in the Gallic monarch's dominions, he was known by the name of *brown John;* from the colour of his hair, and always wearing a coat and hose of the same dye.

When Louis discovered the royal traveller incog, he was highly offended to think he had not paid him homage at his court, in the real character of Edward, Earl of March; for while the thoughtless prince stole the hearts of all the fine ladies about the court and the city of Paris, Louis, saw, with severe mortification, his own sister become an enthusiastic admirer of one, who, in spite of his handsome person, wore the garb of a plebeian adventurer, and who brought with him no creden-

tials to prove the contrary; as the voyage he took was quite a sudden frolic, and utterly unknown to his parents.

The priest, who accompanied him, and who would have been happy to have seen the earl of March deprived of his dignity, and sunk to a level with the meanest of those subjects, who should bow the knee to Henry VI., encouraged his illustrious but heedless companion, to assimilate all the manners of the populace, and by those means prove to Louis he was one of the lower order of the *Tiers-etat;* and thereby render a discovery of his stolen voyage impossible.

It was, however, found out by one of those trifling accidents, which sometimes bring about the most important disclosures. The prince went one day

to view the royal palace and gardens; and let fall the picture of his father, which he then wore, concealed round his neck. On the back of it was the following sentence, formed of small pearls—"The gift of Richard, Duke of York, to his beloved son, Edward, Earl of March."

A confidential servant to Louis, seeing it drop from the stranger, hastily snatched it up, and ran with it to his royal master.

The wearer was seized, and dragged into the presence of Louis. The crafty monarch was struck with the air of dignified and determined majesty in the youthful hero; but, affecting not to perceive it, accused him with theft, in thus purloining a picture evidently belonging to the Earl of March. "I am the Earl of March," said the un-

daunted Edward; "behold," continued he, drawing it from his bosom, "my order of knighthood. Behold the arms of England triumphing over France, and commanding subjection from her."

The cruel man is generally known to be a coward. Louis shuddered at the prophetic boldness of the young prince. He dared not to detain him, but hastily requested that he would quit his court or throw off his disguise, and appear in the dignity of his native character. But Edward, well knowing how highly his father would be offended at this ridiculous frolic, took a speedy leave of the French dominions.

Louis never forgave HIM, whom he imagined was sent as a spy upon his actions. The base and mean are ever suspicious; nor could he remember, without the most keen-felt mortifica-

tion, the haughty and contemptuous speech of the Earl of March on the French monarchy, by deeming it subject to that of England. He took a rooted hatred to Edward and his house: Edward longed to humble the pride of this worthless king; but he loved the pleasures of France, and often dwelt, with pleasing remembrance, on the varied scenes of festivity he had there enjoyed in his disguise.

CHAP. XII.

ILL ASSORTED ATTACHMENT.

——— He never shall find out
Fit mate, but such as some misfortune
Brings him, or mistake—If he love
Withheld by parents; or his happiest choice—
Shall meet already fix'd, in Wedlock bound.

MILTON.

AT this period of history we find no regular licenced theatres: yet places of public amusement were magnificently decorated, and, at their masques, pageants, and tournaments, no expence was spared to render them splendid.

The pageant appeared to take the lead; and men of the first-rate talents presided over them, and undertook

their management and direction, in allotting the parts to the different performers, and in paying them a stipulated salary, according to a prior agreement. This kept these kind of theatres under a respectable subordination; which, though it could not quell the licentious manners of many of the performers, yet kept up that regularity, which held them in proper bounds of decorum, before a respectable audience.

The manager of one of these places of public resort was Sir Thomas Knollys, a great favourite of Edward's, and, like all his other favourites, attached to the cause of Lancaster. Edward gave him an honourable employ about his person; and Sir Thomas, though his principles favoured the adverse party, was too honest a man to injure his lawful

prince. Had he not been possessed of those patriotic principles of honour, he might have become a dangerous enemy; for his profound abilities, as a scholar, and an eloquent speaker, were almost unequalled. He carefully revised the English language, and brought it, in comparison to what it had heretofore been, to a state of purity and elegance. To the proper accentuation of words, we are entirely indebted to this master and reformer of the English tongue.

He was amiable in private life; and his company and conversation were a perpetual treat to his numerous acquaintance. Friends, he had not many; at least not so many as he deserved; for he was one of those fascinating characters, which is loved for a short period by many, but esteemed and valued by few; for alas, his love of

pleasure and cheerful company had rendered him guilty of one unpardonable sin, and that was—poverty! He had been twice an husband from motives of the purest affection: his first wife was possessed of the voice of a syren, and has often been styled the Philomel of England.

The eldest son he had by this marriage, inherited all the taste and polite elegance of his father; and though not quite equal to him in point of education, yet in many transcendent abilities, shewed himself worthy to be the son of such a parent. He possessed, in an uncommon degree, those blandishments of personal fascination, which rendered his father the loved companion of the social hour of festivity. His person, far above mediocrity, accompanied with the bloom of youth

ripened into manhood, gained him easy access amongst all the gayest ladies that then composed the easy thinking females of that dissipated age.

Young Knollys was every where admired, as the exact counterpart of his father, when at his age, by those women of fashion who remembered him at that period, and who, by health and art, were yet able to retain their graces and fascination, and appear in the full possession of juvenile attractions. The really young and sprightly were charmed by the politeness and suavity of his manners, and a Scottish belle became particularly enamoured of him.

This lady, celebrated for her beauty and high accomplishments, had been a few years since espoused to a wealthy gentleman in Scotland. Mr. Knollys saw her, and to see beauty, was, with

him, to admire, and to admire was to resolve, at any rate, to win.

The eyes of lovers are seldom slow in developing each others sentiments. If man boasts superior wisdom to woman, it lies in the art of concealing his own feelings, and easily penetrating into those of the opposite sex. Mr. Knollys soon discovered he was not indifferent to Lady Duncan; and he resolved on the possession of an enchanting female, although her peace of mind was to be destroyed, her character stigmatized, and her conjugal felicity for ever consigned to destruction.

Young, and inexperienced in the sophistry of seduction, she too willingly lent an ear to the false reasonings and delusions of this accomplished young man, whom she had regarded for some time with a fond and fatal partiality.

She fell, in an evil hour, a victim to his false reasonings, and her own inclination, pleading too powerfully in his favour.

Her illicit connexion was discovered by the means of treacherous servants, to whom she had been a kind and indulgent mistress; and her faulty conduct was fully exposed in the public courts of judicature.

There is little doubt but young Knollys would have been honourable enough to have wedded this unfortunate object of his choice, had he been enabled so to do. But he should have reflected, in the ardour of passion, how unlikely it was, that it should ever be in his power. The diseased Sir Thomas Vaughan *without a nose*, pleaded powerfully to be invested with the privilege of taking another wife, while his lady

was yet alive; and perhaps he might have found some wretched and depraved woman, for the sake of wealth and title, willing to take him, with all his defects!

But how often do we see superior talents only urging on their possessor, to make them subservient to the commission of the worst of crimes! And who pities the deluded female? Scarce one.—She is stigmatised, branded with scorn, and expelled the societies, perhaps, for ever, of those called respectable; who, could their own hearts be searched, their own conduct held up to public view, it is possible might be found much more severely reprehensible. Man may delude the wife of his friend, the daughter of his patron; he walks unblushingly abroad;

his fame receives no injury; nay, shocking to relate, females, and females of modesty also, will protect and countenance the spoiler. Woman, for one false step from the path of honour, be she an angel in other virtues, sinks to the lowest species of contempt; to raise the head, in dignified consequence, no more! The virago, who makes her husband's house equal to the habitation of malignant spirits, by a vile and untoward temper; who denies food and raiment to the afflicted; who, because she, from the harshness and repellancy of her constitution, only is chaste,—shall be respected by all, and received into those circles, from whence the warm-hearted and benevolent female, who has stepped once aside from the path of modesty, is totally shut out, and

becomes, perhaps, obliged to pursue that life, which her generous soul shrinks from with horror and disgust. Love only was her fault; and her love disdains to be purchased; it is free as air, and only bound by the ties of reciprocrity.

The above instances, which happened in the fifteenth century, are only mentioned to shew, that human nature is in every age the same. Little are the innovations in morals, since the wise Solomon advised us not to ask, "Why were the former days better than these?"

That superior endowments seduce innocence and unsuspecting confidence, is not peculiar to the present age. It has ever been the case: and that youth and elegance would sometimes unite

itself to deformity, for the sake of wealth; this is not only continually practised among us, but was equally so in the reign of Edward IV.

Sir Robert Lovel, the first cousin to that Lovel, which governed the ministry in the reign of Richard III. married a little woman only three feet high; and who, had she been the daughter of a poor plebeian, would have been shewn for a sight at the different fairs in the country. This is not mentioned as any disparagement to a good and sensible little woman, which she really was, but to shew the depravity and cupidity of man. Lady Lovel's head and face, were too large for a woman of six feet high; but there was a sensibility in her countenance, which evidently discovered much mind within

a body, to which nature had been so unkind. But no goodness of countenance was sufficient to captivate the needy Sir Robert, who was a fine, athletic, handsome young man.

Her friends saw the connexion she had formed, with the deepest concern; yet, finding her determined to follow her *penchant*, they prevailed on her good sense, to insure a large part of her immense fortune to herself. She was accordingly married to Sir Robert, who, finding his hopes disappointed of making himself master of all her fortune, soon deserted her, after the birth of a son, which she presented him with, the first year of their marriage; and the little wife of Sir Robert, having given him, as it is generally supposed, a distaste for the *female* sex; an *enormous*

crime, together with the embarrassed state of his affairs, obliged this worthless knight to quit, for ever, his native country.

CHAP. XIII.

PENANCE.

If yet there be a woe
I have not felt, inflict it on me.

ROWE.

A YOUNGER female branch of the house of York was destined, at the early age of fourteen, to be the wife of the old Count de Hainault. Her temper was volatile, gay, and cheerful; that of the old count, her husband, dark, morose, suspicious, and revengeful. The attentions his blooming bride received at the court of France, filled him with rage; and he resolved to remove his

wife from a place he thought so replete with danger.

He caused a tower to be built on a mountain, in a solitary part of Normandy, to which he carried the lovely countess, with no other companions than himself and an old maid servant. It was in the dreary season of winter, and the isolated tower, seen at a great distance by the superstitious villagers, was imagined to have been constructed by, and to be the haunt of malignant spirits. No one dared to venture near it; and here the beauteous Countess of Hainault, formed to adorn a court, languished out a long and tedious winter, with a tyrant husband, whose love resembled that of Herod for Mariamne; franticly passionate, but selfish in the extreme.

Old Agatha, the servant, went con-

stantly to market, where she was speedily served with what she wanted, being looked upon as a witch. The countess had her music with her, and she would laugh and sing with all the cheerful innocence of infantine gaiety: yet sometimes a void in her heart appeared to want filling up. She would sigh frequently, not unheard by the count, who would, with a terrific voice and frown, interrogate her, who she sighed for! She might, with truth the most sacred, answer, for no one; her heart was untouched, and a kitten or a squirrel would afford her hours of diversion and a partial kind of happiness, by their sportive frolics.

When the spring came on, a new source of disquietude opened itself, and attacked the suspicious mind of the count. The tower bore a romantic ap-

pearance; and many of the nobility, for a few miles round, made it their favourite ride. A young cavalier, charmed with the beautiful figure he had frequently seen on the battlements, paid a daily visit on horseback to the spot, which contained a treasure he sighed for, but who had never even deigned to notice him. The count, fired with jealousy, had observed him frequently, through a small grated window of the tower, and immediately ascended the battlements, where his countess was amusing herself, with arranging some sea-weeds on paper. "Heavens!" uttered the young man, aloud, "do I see my old friend, the Count de Hainault?"—"Ah! De Fierville," said the count, "I knew you not at first; I hope I see you in good health."

A violent clap of thunder and some large drops of rain then falling, the count and countess hastened from the battlements; nor could they do less, from common civility, than invite the young man to shelter himself from the approaching storm.

The count was truly grieved at this unfortunate rencontre. He was under some obligations to the family of De Fierville, and he was fearful of offending him.

De Fierville was handsome, generous, and brave; but, to use the words of the poet, "he knew no limits to his passions." Honour and friendship were useless ties when love was the question; and he resolved, if possible, to obtain the possession of the charming Countess de Hainault, and dishonour

his friend. Vain are the base resolves of men against an all-ruling power!

If her form had before charmed him, the sweet *naivetè* of her behaviour, so blended with refined sense, now almost deprived him of reason. Prudence had no rule over him; his impassioned looks, fixed fervently on the countess, were perceived by her watchful husband, and he secretly and solemnly vowed revenge. He affected some important business at Paris; and told De Fierville, that he hoped his absence would not prevent his calling at the tower, whenever he rode that way. The countess shuddered, she knew not why; a chill dread came over her, and, almost fainting, she was obliged to quit the apartment.

The count, assuming a disguise, repaired no farther than to the nearest

neighbouring village; and, on the second day after his supposed departure for Paris, he lurked about the bottom of the hill on which stood the tower, expecting to see De Fierville approach.

According to his expectations, he saw him enter his dwelling; and then, waiting for a few minutes, the count rushed into the apartment where his wife was sitting, and found De Fierville on his knees before her, breathing the most passionate vows of love and affection. The count turned pale; but he dissembled his rage, and ordered his wife to ascend the battlements, and there remain until he sent for her. "You are armed, De Fierville," said he, with affected indifference, after having intreated him to take some refreshment. "I never travel these roads unarmed," replied the

embarrassed De Fierville. "And I, never even remain at home unarmed," said De Hainault, fixing his eyes on his guest, "for robbers and *spoilers* will enter the most secluded abode." The confusion of De Fierville increased, and he hastened to take his leave. "I will walk with you to the valley below," said the count; and, as they walked along, De Fierville recovered, in some degree, his serenity, as they conversed on indifferent subjects with apparent unconcern.

The countess, from the illicit protestations of De Fierville, and from the unexpected return of her husband, was, for the first time in her life, thrown into a state of serious reflection. The morning was beautifully fine; a mild, spring sun illumined the valley; and a sweet serenity tempered the surround-

ing air. My envied rank, thought the countess, towers over those that are lowly born, like this rude and rueful building over the pleasant humble valley. Oh, birth! Oh, fortune! if thy favours are such, in general, as I boast, how preferable is the lot of those who tread the lower walks of life. She gave a deep sigh to the memory of her early childhood; when her thoughts took another channel, at seeing her husband and De Fierville approach to that part of the valley she was looking towards. De Fierville walked and led his horse by the bridle: his gestures, as well as those of Hainault, appeared fierce and menacing: fearing the count would imagine that she was gazing at De Fierville, she hastily walked away, and looked over on the other side; when presently she saw the horse of

De Fierville galloping away, seemingly in wild affright. A violent clashing of swords now assailed her ears; and she darted, in frantic fear, to that side of the tower she had quitted, and saw both her husband and De Fierville bleed and fall: both fell—murdered by each other's hand!

Pale, the semblance of marble, stood the countess; not a tear fell from her eyes. Agatha mounted the battlements, and found her in this terrific state. She had just sense to point to the dreadful spot, and was borne senseless to her chamber by her faithful and affectionate old servant. Before evening, her afflicted bosom was somewhat relieved by tears: her mind was, however, fixed in a resolution, which she determined not to break. She sent to her friends at Paris; she ordered them

to send her requisites for the deepest mourning habits. She caused the body of De Fierville to be transported to the sepulchre of his ancestors; while she erected a stately monument over the remains of her husband, in the valley, and on the very spot where, for her sake, he had lost his life.

She then wrote letters, signifying her intention of immediately returning to England to her royal parents: but remained at the tower, unknown to any one, resolving there to end her days, in a penance the most severe, for what she had been innocently the cause of.

She knew she could impose more upon herself than the rules of the most rigid convent could inflict. She rose in the middle of the night, and, at early morning, noon, and evening, her fervent prayer to the Holy Virgin was,

to be pleased to deprive her of that beauty, which had thus brought destruction on others. When the wind roared through the mountains, when the bleak rain descended in torrents, she would sit on the battlements, with her eyes fixed on the tomb of her husband. She would recollect, in these sad moments, nothing of his harshness or his unkindness towards her; but only every proof she had received from the unhappy man of his sincere and ardent love for her. When she found a kind of apathetic content in her mind, by thus frequently accustoming herself to continued acts of severe and habitual penance; she would take her lute and play on it such mournful and pathetic airs, as melted her soul, and brought the sad tribute

of tears to all her real and self-created sorrow.

Though she scarce took nourishment sufficient to support nature, yet her youth, her native health, spite of her being worn almost to a shadowy form, preserved her angelic beauty. She looked like an aërial being, and seemed already stepping from the confines of earth to heaven.

Agatha had parted with her only daughter, who, by her volubility, when she had used to visit her mother at the tower, had often entertained the youthful countess, during the lifetime of her husband. She had lately taken the veil in an English convent; and old Agatha, unable to support the loss of this only and beloved child, fell into a melancholy and incurable sickness.

Disguised in the dress of a female

peasant, the lovely Countess de Hainault would repair to the surrounding villages, and load herself with a basket containing wine and other comforts for the poor invalid. She nursed her with unremitting care; but Agatha died, the victim of sorrow, age, and sickness. With her own fair hands the countess dug her grave! She chaunted over her remains a requiem of the sweetest harmony; she raised an humble tomb of turf over it; and often, very often, bedewed it with her tears! Now, thought she, my penance is complete! I have ever hated to be left quite alone: thus, then, let me fill that measure of mortification I have imposed upon myself. Now banished for ever are the smiles from this sad countenance! When I ascend the battlements, I view the tombs of an husband

and a faithful servant! I look, in vain, to see a living, human form; I hear nought but imaginary and terrific noises; and I listen, with rueful disappointment, for the returning voice of soothing friendship and tried fidelity. The sound of my music terrifies me; therefore, whatever I find repugnant, I will eagerly adopt. The trembling countess, then, casting a fearful look around her solitary apartment, catched up her lute, and began one of those sweetly mournful strains, which, during her penance, she had been accustomed to perform.

CHAP. XIV.

A MYSTERY ELUCIDATED.

My only love, sprung from my only hate!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE moon shone clear, the night was sultry, and the air was hushed into that heavy calm, which casts a death-like silence on the final departure of day, when Henry, Prince of Wales, after his retirement to France, from a late defeat, was riding through that part of Normandy, in which was erected the interesting tower. He stopped his horse to admire a scene so peculiarly romantic, and which bore so fairy-

like an appearance. On the summit of a fine, grassy hill stood a tower; and, from the rude haste with which it had been formed, appeared to have been erected in ages the most remote. Aromatic shrubs and flowers were elegantly planted round the level on which it stood; while a moon, at its full lustre, reflected the shadow of this apparent piece of antiquity on the distant hills. And, as he turned his eyes from the building they had first rested on, he perceived in the valley, the sumptuous tomb of alabaster, which the countess had erected over her husband. It represented an aged knight, and another in the flower of youth, both stabbing each other, and in the attitude of falling; a female form, in silent agony, hung over them; and waved her hand, in disgust and horror,

to a figure of Hymen, whose torch was represented extinguished in blood!

As the prince gazed in astonishment at the scene before him, the soft airs of the lute harmonized the dead and solemn silence of the night. Enthusiastic as brave, the young hero imagined himself in the regions of enchantment. He tied his horse to a tree; and proceeded, on foot, to take a nearer view of the tower.

A door, at its rugged entrance, stood half open; he perceived a mourning robe flowing in drapery on the floor; while a milk-white thin arm struck the chords of, while its partner supported, a lute. He trod so softly he was unheard; and retired, respecting the seclusion of the charming performer.

The next morning was cloudy, and

threatened a rainy day. Wrapped in an horseman's cloak, which half concealed his face, he repaired to the interesting spot he had quitted in haste the preceding evening. The rain fell in gentle showers; and, as he cast his eyes upwards, he beheld the lovely countess, with her looks devoutly fixed on heaven; pale as the lilly, thin as the slender reed, yet exquisitely beautiful. Her lips, which moved in presenting their morning orisons, had not lost their native coral hue: her fair and long-flowing hair waved over her sable habit; and her whole exterior exhibited a personified emblem of sorrowing beauty.

Unable to take his eyes from so striking an object, he remained motionless before her; when the neighing of his steed roused the countess from her

reverie. She instantly descended, and Henry, determining to observe more caution in future, returned home.

For several evenings she discontinued playing on her lute—yet, at every close of day, at every dawn of morning, did the prince attend; but the form, which had riveted his attention, could no where be found.

The doors and grated windows of the tower were closely shut; nor did there appear the least vestige of its being inhabited. He began at length to imagine, that what he had seen, was some illusion of his senses; yet so full was his mind of the divine image, that he vowed within himself, never to own another love!

The countess, during this time, had become the prey of terror and despair; starting at her own shadow, trembling

at the breath of a zephyr. She longed once more to see "the human face divine," and her penance might now be called truly severe. If a short slumber took possession of her wearied frame, dreadful visions broke it, and made her awake in frantic horror, dreading to close her heavy eyes again. Add to this, the superstition of the age she lived in, which taught the creed of evil spirits being permitted to harass the soul, that was doomed to a rigorous penance.

After one of these wretched nights, she had past a lonely and sorrowful day, the evening of which was bright and warm. After taking some trifling sustenance, she repaired to the lower apartment of the tower, and opened the door, to take in the reviving air, and to prevent her from

fainting. The opening of the door had been too great an effort for her declining strength, and she fell, apparently to rise no more.

The Prince paid his accustomed evening's visit. He joyfully espied the opening door; and resolved to traverse the apartments of this gothic fabric, in hopes of finding the treasure it contained. The countess had fallen behind the door, in the act of opening it. Henry did not perceive her, and, kindling a light by some dying embers he perceived on the hearth, he set forward to explore the interior of the building.

In one room he beheld a straw pallet spread on a bedstead of iron, a crucifix, an hour-glass, and a rusty iron lamp: in another were implements for drawing, music of the newest and best

chosen kind; exotic plants in superb vases, drooping for want of care.

He next perceived a door hung over with branches of cypress and yew; and on the door was written, "death exults in triumph over my bridal chamber!"

The prince opened the door with some difficulty. The damp air of this apartment almost extinguished his light; but the moon shone full on a bed of state, richly hung with crimson velvet and gold: the feathers at each corner represented the coronet of a prince of the blood-royal of France.

A picture hung opposite the bed, to

which he held his candle, and perceived it was the most beautiful female he had ever beheld: youthful and plump as an Hebe, the dimpled cheeks smiled with innocence and love, and he could scarce recognise in this portrait the features of the countess; but her roseate mouth, half open, convinced him it was the likeness of the beautiful object he had seen on the battlements.

Every part of the furniture of this costly apartment, accorded with the magnificence of the hangings. After taking an hasty look at the other chambers, he descended to the lower room which he had first entered. The first object, as he looked earnestly forward, was the countess extended on the floor, without sense, and seemingly

without life. "Alas!" cried he aloud, "she is dead! those lips are cold as marble, and that voice, which might bring down seraphs from above, is mute, for ever!" By the aid of water, however, from a neighbouring spring, he brought her to herself: she looked up, to thank her deliverer, and saw the most beautiful youth she had ever beheld. She already fancied herself among celestial beings, and was almost prompted to ask, what resplendent spirit had come to welcome her to the realms of unfading happiness!

Henry of Lancaster, Prince of Wales, the son of Henry VI, and of Margaret of Anjou, was then in the eighteenth year of his age. Had a painter desired a

subject to represent an angel, he would have chosen the form and countenance of Henry. He had not a movement, but was replete with grace. His hair, bright and redundant, curled with manly grace over his fair, open, forehead; his eyes, beaming with love and mildness, seemed to look forward to that celestial happiness, which, by his premature martyrdom, he was so soon fated to enjoy.

He raised the lovely mourner; comforted her with those soothing accents of friendship and pity, so peculiar to himself; and he persuaded her to take some nourishment, from the scanty store he found in her dwelling.

Her heart had never yet experienced

a tender emotion for one of the sons of men. She could not now, with her mind softened by sorrow, and the sudden happiness of being relieved from dreary and solitary horror by one so amiable, behold this captivating stranger with indifference; and she accepted his delicate attentions, with a modest willingness, and chastened delight.

He visited her daily. Each hour added to the interest they mutually experienced; till at length, he brought her to consent to quit for ever this mournful abode, where every thing conspired to make her wretched. Enough had been given to anguish, enough to penance: love now took his turn to rule, and he ruled with unbounded sway. Not all the ancient enmities of

each other's house, could prevent the lovers forming that indissoluble attachment, which death only can divide.

Henry confided the secret of his love to an aged priest, who united them in the bonds of marriage; and rejoiced in what, he, good man! imagined might bring about an union between the two families. To effect this, the bride of the prince repaired to England, threw herself at the feet of her royal parents, and acknowledged the hasty step she had taken, without their consent.

She was the Duchess of York's favourite daughter; the last child of her age. From her, she obtained immediate forgiveness; but her brothers' never

pardoned her for thus uniting with their mortal enemy. This loss of their affection, and her delicate frame being injured by the rigid abstinence she had observed during her penance, soon brought her to an early grave; and she expired, after having brought into the world her express image, the beautiful Elfrida.

Henry, who sincerely mourned his irreparable loss, now became careless and indifferent of himself, and the crown he was born to inherit. Apathy marked his private actions, and rash desperation his courage. For political motives, in compliance with the will of an arbitrary mother, he united himself to the lovely and accomplished Lady Ann, afterwards wife to

Richard III. At the decisive battle of Tewkesbury, he came forward with a ferocious rashness, as if resolving to rush on death; and wildly demanded of a triumphant conqueror, "his father's dominions and his own."

His dreadful and tragical martyrdom is well known, and has been ably delineated by English historians. It reflects no honour on the York party; but evidently shews, that the courage of the interesting Henry, at that period, was attended with all that wild despair, which marked a partial insanity, from irreparable sorrow.

The daughter of old Agatha was the voluble nun, who instantly recognised

the Countess of Hainault's features in Elfrida, on her arrival at the convent in Suffolk. Of the fate and fortune of this offspring of the youthful branches of the opposite parties, history has left us yet in the dark.

CHAP. XV.

A CARELESS HUSBAND.

——————— Like the base Judean,
Threw a pearl away.

SHAKESPEARE.

LADY Eleanor Dudley married, at a very early period of her youth, a rich, but private gentleman, of the name of Fitz-osborne. He was of a noble family; but the title of his ancient house was so far remote from himself, that it appeared very improbable he should outlive those generations on whom it must first devolve. However, his respectable connexions and apparent large fortune, gained him the

easy consent of Lady Eleanor's friends, to his marriage with her.

He proved to be an husband who loved the pleasures of the chace and the bottle more than the company and conversation of his blooming bride; who felt but little affection for one, whom she had been rather compelled to promise obedience and honour to, than to her own concurring sentiments of regard and esteem.

She was lovely in her person, but her mind was not very highly cultivated. Her reading was confined, like that of too many females, in that rude age, to the study of legendary tales and knight errant love; which absorbed her ideas in a superstitious system, that

taught her to imagine herself the passive object of an over-ruling fate, which had not yet destined her to behold the man she was really to love. When that epocha of her life should arrive, the diviners and professors of witchcraft, with which that credulous age abounded, assured her she would be devoted to him for ever, and he to her, with the most enthusiastic and increased fondness. Her young mind was, in that state, easily warped; but as easily moulded to excellent principles, had her husband stayed more at home with her, attended her more when she went abroad, and not have left her continually, as he did, to solitude and to the indulgence of leisure hours to cherish her favourite system, which taught her, although she was

married, it being to a man she rather disliked, there was yet a lover in store for her, to render her present blank and uncomfortable life a scene of pleasure and delight.

Fitz-osborne was extravagant. The fortune of Lady Eleanor was soon exhausted; debts began to accumulate; and he requested to borrow an immense sum of a young friend, the Marquis of Dorset. He lent it instantly; and Fitz-osborne requested him thenceforward to look on his house, his table, and his servants, as his own, and command them accordingly.

Dorset, at first sight, was charmed with Lady Eleanor; and he, lovely

as an Adonis, seemed to her enraptured ideas, the long promised, the destined, and permanent adorer.

Presents flowed in with seemingly exhaustless profusion. The jewellers' shops were rifled of their richest gems, to decorate the beauteous Eleanor. Game, of the choicest kind; foreign wines of the most exquisite flavour; crowned the now plentiful board of Fitz-osborne, from the county of the enamoured marquis. The husband left his blooming bride in a solitary castle in the country, with only a part of his vassals to attend her, and no other companion, than the young and dangerous Dorset, who, the moment he paid Fitz-osborne a visit, always furnished him with some excuse for his

absence. After insisting on his staying to do the honours of his house for him, he was suddenly indisposed, and change of air was absolutely necessary to the preservation of his life; or unexpected business called him to the metropolis.

In the mean time, these thoughtless young people gave themselves up to the indulgence of their illicit attachment; more illicit on the part of Dorset than on that of the silly and inexperienced Eleanor. He was solemnly betrothed, and in haste to conclude his marriage with one of the lovely and amiable daughters of the Countess of Westmoreland; at the same time that he was insidiously ruining the peace of a woman, who loved him

with sincerity, though dishonouring the confidence of her husband. A learned author remarks, most justly, "that the instant a man ceases to be kind and faithful, he becomes jealous." Such was the case with Fitz-osborne;" though it is universally believed, that the deranged state of his affairs inspired him with the idea of building them up anew on the ruin of his wife. He had become faithless to her; and he remembered her personal charms with the most chill indifference.

To prove how little impression beauty and youthful simplicity, attached to a wife, were able to make on his mind, he had, prior to the marquis's visits at his house, attached himself to a female Welch minstrel, whose

skill on the harp rose far superior to that of all the ancient bards or minstrels that had ever before performed on that instrument. She had been introduced to the court and nobility for her wonderful talents; was employed by the great at their pageants, to strike the song of triumph at their tournaments; and, on the great festivals of the nativity, of the new year, and epiphany, she struck the silver strings, in honour of the immaculate virgin and her divine son.

Whether the charms of music could alone be capable of touching the heart of Fitz-osborne is unknown; or from what unaccountable fascination, it is difficult to determine; for it is certain, that Gweldina was not only

plain, but unlovely in her person, and arrived at an age, when women seldom receive more than cold respect.

The expensive turn of Fitz-osborne's mind, with the added charge of an extravagant mistress, obliged him to turn his thoughts to the procuring of some means, to mend his shattered circumstances. The support of his wife had been, for some length of time, entirely defrayed by the Marquis of Dorset; and Fitz-osborne ventured, before he came to extremities, to borrow another round sum of him. This was made use of in being lavished upon Gweldina; and when that was gone, he even dared to apply to Dorset again. But, what with the extravagant finery with which he had adorned his Ele-

anor, and the frequent innovations of Fitz-osborne on his coffers, he was compelled, more from necessity than inclination, to refuse him a third loan.

And now, the thoughtless and guilty husband determined to bring his case before a court of justice; criminate the wife whom he had neglected and sold, and obtain a fine from the marquis, sufficient to reinstate his embarrassed fortune. He began, in a short absence of the marquis from his castle, to intercept the lovers' letters. They contained sufficient proof of the guilty attachment: inviolable vows of eternal fidelity from both; from Dorset an ardent exhortation to his beloved Eleanor, to quit her country, and live with him abroad, as his acknowledged

wife; and reign for ever, the sovereign over his faithful heart. These letters were proof sufficient. Fitz-osborne urged his public plea, in a formal manner; but little were his gains; he was proved, by every corroborating circumstance, to have been himself the betrayer of his wife's honour, by his shameful negligence of her, and the purposed opportunity he laid in her way. His guilty attachment to Gweldina was sufficiently proved; and Dorset, in his defence, declared him to be, a mean spirited husband, who had "*eaten and drank his wife.*"

Fitz-osborne, soon after, retired to France, where the cruel Louis made him endure every privation of comfort, and experience all the anguish of a

severe imprisonment. Eleanor, the deceived and wretched Eleanor, was, in the end, abandoned totally by him, in whom she had placed her unlimited and much mistaken confidence. He, the Marquis of Dorset, became just to his amiable and virtuous wife; and the errors of the ill-fated Eleanor, were, even by the most rigid, pitied and forgotten.

CHAP. XVI.

EXALTED VIRTUE.

So good a lady,
That no tongue dare yet
Pronounce dishonour of her.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE the pen has often undergone the unpleasant task of depicting the vices and follies of mankind, it dwells with peculiar pleasure on those virtues, which add dignity to high birth, and transmit to distant ages the revered memory of their possessor. Such was Mary, a lady of the blood royal of Scot-

land; who, both in felicity and misfortune, retained her fortitude; and forgot not, in all the anguish of sorrow, her innate dignity of mind and manners.

Wedded to the husband, both of her own choice and that of her royal relatives, a numerous and beautiful progeny promised her a continuance of that happiness, which she enjoyed during her prime of life.

To her skill in languages, music, and every other elegant accomplishment, she united all those qualifications that could render permanently happy the domestic duties of wife and mother. She lived but for her Donald and his beloved offspring; and she never neg-

lected the refined education she had received; but, by unremitted practice, kept those admirable talents in continual play, that she might ever remain the cherished companion of an husband she adored.

Fanatics have not been wanting in every age, since the first preaching of christianity; and the more unpolished and unenlightened the time, so much more pernicious is the consequence of enthusiasm, and more to be dreaded; as the mind wants developement, and too easily catches at the marvellous and terrific.

A vociferous and ignorant preacher had broached a new kind of religion, which had in view, to prove this world

to be only a valley of tears; that privation of all pleasure, and continual mortification from the most moderate enjoyment of the good things of this life, was the only way to please that beneficent being, who delights in the happiness of his creatures; but whom this wretched fanatic represented as a merciless judge, dealing out only whips, scourges, and eternal fire, to whoever should dare to think of finding any satisfaction in the vain and perishable pleasures of this life. Dancing was the certain step to everlasting condemnation; music would be succeeded by continually hearing the yells of tormented spirits; and even the love of wife or children was an offence against him, who should occupy solely not only our admiration but affections.

Donald, in an evil hour, being in a melancholy mood, went one day to hear the *holy man*, as the ignorant and superstitious people styled him; and, though he was first prompted by curiosity, and a desire of passing away the time, he imbibed the poison of fanaticism in a moment; and, on his return home, found his once idolized Mary teaching the agile forms of her lovely daughters, to move with grace and precision to the notes of her lute.

The change in his sad and sallow countenance instantly struck her. She tenderly took his hand, while he seemed to shudder at her touch. She imagined a trifling indisposition was the cause of his seeming sadness; and she sent her blooming girls to repose, and desisted

from that music her Donald had once taken so much delight in.

He continued to follow the preacher, till his mind became the prey of a dark and morbid melancholy. The sweet and cheerful innocence of his former gay occupations now appeared to his bewildered senses, like so many heinous and unpardonable crimes. The roseate bloom of health had left his cheek; and, fearful of practising indulgence of any kind, he carefully abstained from every dish he had most liked, and thus entirely lost his appetite. Mary called in the aid of the best physicians, and they prescribed strong exercise to their patient, as the only means of rousing him from this dreadful lethargy of all his nobler mental facul-

ties. The chace was particularly recommended; but in hunting, riding, or walking, the unhappy Donald saw only, in idea, an angry God ready to punish him for sins he had never been guilty of, or capable of committing.

One day he desired the chace to proceed, as he felt fatigued with riding so fast. Soon after, one of the huntsmen, lagging rather behind, heard a violent plunge in a neighbouring river:—Donald was drowned! and it was too late to save him!

Various were the conjectures on this sad event; but his retreat from the chace, and the instruments of death being found concealed under his clothes, gave rise to the general supposition,

that he had precipitated his own death.

Dreadful was the situation of the interesting and afflicted Mary, when the dead body of her beloved husband was brought to his castle by his mourning vassals; for they loved the kind and tender master, whose faults arose from the spirit of meekness and diffidence in his own virtue.

The deep sorrow of Mary can be better felt than described. On her knees she solemnly vowed never to own another lord: and, indeed, it had always been a fixed principle with her, that the woman who marries a second time is blameworthy:—if this, her opinion, was an error, she certainly erred on the right side.

Exalted Virtue.

The day on which Donald's body was brought home, she gave herself up to all the frenzy of violent grief. The sight of her children the next day, brought to her mind the conviction of those duties she was bound to perform: for myself, thought she, the world is become a blank! but for their sakes, for their happiness, exertion and activity on my part are indispensable virtues. Her women entered her apartment to assist her in dressing; as she looked in her mirror, the first object her eyes rested on, was her shining and luxuriant hair, in which charm of person her Donald had taken the greatest delight. Taking up a pair of scissors, she instantly cut it off. "Oh, my Donald!" cried she, weeping, "to thy memory I consecrate these tresses, which

never more shall charm a mortal eye: myself I dedicate to perpetual widowhood, and to the sole welfare and happiness of the dear pledges of our unsullied love."

Her habit, from that day, was that of a nun of the most rigid mourning order; nor would she be prevailed on to shew a single vestige of her once beautiful hair.

She formed the minds of her children on the basis of the purest virtue. She studied more to make them good and happy, than rich or great; while she continued to cultivate and improve her own elegant acquirements in polite and useful learning, that all her hours might be employed in their improvement.

Her daughters proved themselves worthy of such a mother; married by consent of their noble parent to men they really loved, they were patterns of conjugal fidelity and maternal affection. Where sincere attachment had been considered in their union more than wealth or title, they knew how, through the instructions of their venerable mother, to unite elegance with frugality; and, by well-judged economy in their own interior household, to practise, in the glad welcome they afforded their friends, all the rites of hospitality.

The eldest son of Donald and Mary inherited the titles and honours of his father, and all the virtue and fortitude of his mother. He was wise in the se-

nate, laudably magnificent in his high station, and amiable in private life. His younger brothers entered the world early, in the different professions of the church and army: those who embraced a religious life, attained to high eminence, and proved an honour to the sacerdotal dignity. The life of a soldier admits of little variation; but the sons of Donald and Mary, all proved the noble race from whence they sprung, by the bright rays of their genius, and the polish of their manners.

The giddy and unthinking world thought Mary a very eccentric lady; and some few did not scruple to say, that *she was "a little touched in the head."*

It is thus the unfeeling heedlessly

pass over the traces of sorrow; and wonder to see the smile of resignation and a temporary cheerfulness under the constant sable garb of woe. Mary's disposition and superior wisdom taught her to shed the silent tear in her closet; and to be sometimes even gay in company, nor ever suffer her sorrows to be troublesome to others. Her mourning habit was not the symbol of ostentatious or hypocritical sorrow; but her widowed heart approved it; and it afforded her that satisfaction, whenever she cast her eye upon it, that as it was of a religious order, so it was figurative of her being dead to the pleasures of the world; and its sable colour was a pledge of that widowhood she had vowed to preserve.

She was possessed of feelings the

most lively and acute; how great, then, was her fortitude to support, as she did, affliction of the deepest kind! Nurtured in splendor and elegance, married early in life to the only man she loved, she had experienced, in his tragical death, sorrow in the severest degree. How few women, after such an event, could have supported affliction like her, who devoted herself to the care and education of a numerous family, with unabated perseverance! But the noble Mary's virtues were all of the active kind; her life was employed in doing good to others, and in relieving distress. After attaining to an healthy old age, with all her faculties unimpaired, and constantly improving her inestimable talents to the very last, she saw and blessed her children's children, and

died regretted by all her relatives and friends; and, deeply lamented by those, to whom she herself had been the constant friend,—the children of sorrow and indigence.

CHAP. XVII.

FEMALE DEGRADATION.

She should be wooed,
And, not unsought, be won.

MILTON.

TO a sex, subject to many oppressions, the author of this work has endeavoured to shew every possible protection. Yet, never let the reader imagine, that a blind or mistaken partiality can ever guide a pen, devoted to the cause of candour, and a fair investigation of the manners of the age it treats of.

Female Degradation.

Woman, when the deluded victim of refinement and superior qualifications, is entitled to every defence and kind mitigation of her conduct. When man deludes, with, often, the most specious sophistry, and calls in that depth of understanding to his aid, which woman, however bright her talents, never yet could boast; the heart is devoid of every generous sentiment, which cannot feel for her fallen state, and afford her, at least, the tribute of pity and commiseration. But when a woman descends to court her servant, a man every way her inferior; when she is so wretchedly depraved; death is not too severe a punishment for such a breach of her marriage vow.

It is an old and just remark, that

a wicked woman exceeds by far a wicked man in vice; and it may well be accounted for. The feelings of woman are of the most exquisite kind; and she is less under the control of those other virtues, which mark the mind of man. Strength of reason, courage, and *austere* virtue, are scarcely known in the feminine composition; but, in recompence, she is endowed with an innate veneration for modesty, and that keen apprehensive fear, that, should she give way to her inclinations, she may lose the love of that object, to whic she might otherwise be willing to sacrifice her dearest fame. The pride of that virtue, with the dread of his contempt, bear her up firm on the dangerous basis of chastity; while the softness and disinterestedness of her nature, render her

more thoughtful of the happiness of her lover than of her own; and, if he is a man of strict honour, she will be safe to cherish her affection for him, in all its native and unsullied purity.

But the disgusting, wicked, and depraved, female, knows nothing of these ornamental virtues. The tenderness, natural to the sex, in her, degenerates into sensuality; and man only becomes to her a sexual being. The pride of virtue, if ever she had any, is totally banished: her conduct becomes detestable to men of the higher and middling classes of life; and, to gratify her depraved inclinations, she descends to make the most unequivocal advances to the lowest of mankind.

But so much did licentiousness stalk

abroad in the reign of Edward IV., that not only the beautiful Countess di Ladona, (a name well known in the annals of low gallantry,) was guilty of so horribly disgracing herself, but also, the, hitherto, virtuous city dames, were contaminated, and scandalized by the conduct of one of their sisterhood: who had acted towards a kind and affectionate husband, in the most reprehensible manner.

But the Countess di Ladona, a lady of high and illustrious birth, was unpardonable in the vile example she set; and, in disgracing her nobility, or rather her whole sex, in the shameful manner she did. Her family, however, did not owe all the discredit attached to them, unto her; for she had three

brothers, who were, from their early childhood, infamous for their vicious propensities, for every species of cruelty to harmless animals, and who, as they grew up to manhood, were notorious for the licentiousness of their conduct.

The eldest brother's passion was chiefly confined to the getting rid of his almost princely fortune, as speedily as possible. He particularly wasted it, in exhibitions of pageantry and shew, and in feeding and making drunk, an old fat captain, who preferred the slaughter of venison and poultry, to that of his enemies; and cut a much more valiant figure, in the field of Bacchus, than in that of Mars.

The young Earl of Sunbury and his brothers used frequently to amuse themselves by practising the most low and dirty tricks on this groveling veteran, who, proud of associating with *their Lordships*, and of having twice dined with them in the gay society of the merry Edward, bore all their filthy manœuvres with the most perfect good humour---his mind's eye resting on the fair prospect of those *good dinners* which this docility secured to him.

One of these noble Lords was much deformed; and was frequently spoken of by the sirname of the *Cripple:* the other two brothers had also nick-names analogous to their characters: the eldest was unfortunately taken off, in

the flower of his youth, by the accidental going off of a gun, which stood loaded beside him.

The beautiful lady Euphrasia, their sister, had captivated the heart of the Count di Ladona; a nobleman of Italian extraction, but who had great possessions in France, where he had long resided: the despotic rulers, however, of that country, had rendered the count disgusted with his residence there, and he sold his estates, and settled in England.

His ancient family, his wealth and fine person, easily obtained him the hand of Lady Euphrasia: who was a miracle of beauty, but a monster of depravity. So rude were her manners,

that, from her castle, situated in the pleasant and fertile county of Berkshire, she would ride on horseback, some miles through the different towns, and, loaded with shells and stones, would throw them against every thing liable to be broken that came in her way, and often wound or maim the accidental passenger; though this mischievous sport being generally nocturnal, few people were hurt by these unaccountable frolics.

But so low and groveling were her amorous inclinations, that from the scum of society, boatmen, tide-waiters, and porters, she chose her lovers; this conduct, with her coarse and indelicate conversation and manners, gave her the nickname of that famous fish-

market, where Billingsgate now stands.

Her constant companion and bosom friend, was a lady who excelled the present Naids of that oratorical place, in swearing and high sounding metaphors of vociferous abuse; who had been a public kept mistress, but was raised to the dignity of a wealthy knight's lady, who married her in a fit of jealousy, and to whom she became a termagant wife.

The knight had been a famous "City Beau." He had lived some time in great harmony with this lady, without the fetters of matrimony; but was suddenly tortured with an anxiety, unknown to him before, at

seeing the Duke of Gloucester shake hands with his dear sultana at a ball. Therefore, to keep her entirely to himself, he married her the next morning: and she whistled after his grooms, fed his sprightly coursers, of which he was passionately fond; and she betted upon their fleetness with spirit, and the best grace in the world.

A set of low fellows, encouraged by female depravity, in all kinds of insolence, and willing to ape their superiors, formed themselves into different orders of knighthood, of their own invention. Among some of these ludicrous orders, one was denominated the *Knights of the Whip*! chiefly composed of stable boys, and those

who had the care of gentlemen's horses. A wealthy city lady, possessed of all the lubricity of the Countess di Ladona, but very far her inferior in personal attractions, fell so deeply in love with one of these *soi-disant* knights, that she observed neither decency nor circumspection in her abandoned inclinations. She would follow him to the kitchen; she would order his breakfast and his enormous *livery*;* and give instructions to the cook, in what she would wish them to consist of. The chambers of her female servants and her own superb apartments were equally the scenes of this iniquitous amour: she would even quit the society of re-

* A meal eaten in the bed-chamber, just before going to rest.

spectable friends, and repair home to meet the disgusting and vulgar partner of her illicit affections.

This is a subject which inspires so much horror and distaste, that the pen would suffer pollution in retracing it with any degree of prolixity. Nor should it find a place here, only to mark the uncontrolled libertinism of the times that these pages have recorded, and to express an idea, that naturally presents itself; viz. that some difference ought to be made in the rigidity of that law, which condemns alike to shame, and exclusion from that society, reputed modest and decorous, the unfortunate deluded female, who has a faithless and cruel husband, and whose fault proceeds from love,

for a seducing and superior object; and her, the despicable female, who prefers the low menial in the stable to a kind and worthy husband, and throws off all sense of virtue, and of shame.

CHAP. XVIII.

PROPHECIES.

The day will come, which nothing can avert,
When by the spear, the arrow or the dart,
By night, by day, by force or by design,
Impending death, and certain fate are thine.

POPE'S HOMER.

THE arbitrary and tyrannical ruler of France, was rapidly extending his territories, and acquiring, by treachery, plunder, and cruelty, an immensity of riches. As no one good principle seemed to actuate the breast of Louis XI., he was feared by many, but

loved by none. His conduct became every day more atrocious and enormous; and he was universally deprecated and detested, as the scourge and destroyer of the human race.

When the unhappy Duke of Burgundy, before his fatal overthrow, allied himself solely to Louis, and, in a dastardly manner, left his former ally, the King of England; the English sent off the duke's chief minister, in that way, which, to the everlasting honour of the country, has ever characterized the British nation. Louis observed neither decency nor the laws of nations in his outward behaviour; when the cruel caprice of mortifying a generous enemy, or even an imbecile ally, happened to be the predominant

inclination, which darted across his wayward mind. He, therefore, did not suffer the Duke of Burgundy's confidential minister to land in his dominions; so he was obliged to sail back to Dover, with his accompanying suite.

The world, sick of his enormities, prayed heaven to rid them of this desolating monster, who seemed sent, in the wrath of heaven, as a punishment for the sins of mankind. But more than half of the civilized world, were sunk in popish superstition ; and Louis was a careful observer of Romish rites and ceremonies.

An half frantic-female, from the north of Germany, had, however,

foretold some remarkable events, which *should*, and *did* befal the tyrant; but she had wisdom; and the wise generally foresee *events* in their *causes*.

She travelled from town to town, in strange attire, prophesying as she went along; her hair flowing, and her eyes fixed on heaven. She declared, that the scourge of France, would never die a natural death: but that he would be brought into an house, in an obscure village in Europe. In the apartment would be seated an English officer; but whether, or no, he would be killed by this officer, nothing would engage her to tell. The question threw her, apparently, into great agony; and the paroxysms of her sybil-like inspirations, at these moments, gene-

rally ended in a long and violent fit. When recovered, her eyes brightened; and she cried, with rapture, entirely devoid of any savage ferocity, "I WILL BE THERE!"

The innocency of her life, the verifying of several of her predictions, her learning, devoid of all pedantry, and her unfeigned humility, made her universally sought after, and respected; thus prophecies became the fashion of the day.

The study of the Bible, because it is the language of unerring truth, in ages subject to papal tyranny, is, of course, disallowed; but the few learned of the fifteenth century, when learning was no longer a crime (as it was held in the

beginning of the fourteenth,) explored the scriptures privately, and read them with avidity and attention. Skilled in the Greek and Hebrew, they perceived all those original beauties, which must, assuredly, have suffered by a translation, however correct.

The reformists, in silent wonder, ruminated deeply on the Book of the Revelations of Saint John the Divine, the chosen, the highly favoured disciple of the REDEEMER of mankind. The reflective eye shot its glances into fraternity; and beheld, in the harlot's sanguinary coloured robe, Rome seated triumphant over seven hills, and persecuting the saints by a false religion. They also beheld with joy, in ages yet to come, the downfall of the papal

power. The worst instruments often bring about the most happy causes. William, the Conqueror, laid a prosperous country waste, and planted the New Forest to hunt in; he has been called for that, an "wholesale butcher," who ruined whole families, for his diversion! Look at the result! the New Forest has furnished timber, which floating on the inconstant billows makes England ride triumphant over the whole world; and supports more states than double the number of those families that William ruined.

The tyrannical and cruel Henry VIII. gave a blow to papal power, which effected the establishment of reformation in England; and, while weak reason repines at Almighty power, for suffer-

ing the atrocities of an usurper, the wickedness of Jewish kings, and princes, high in earthly power, brought about the great work of UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION.

The crimes and cruelties of Louis XI., his gross superstition and idolatry, made these learned clergy imagine, that HE must be meant by the beast, mentioned in Revelations, who was the DESTROYER; and a gay and lively young priest declared, one evening, that he had found out the number of the beast, and it *was* "the number of a *man*," according to the Latin name of Louis—Ludovicus—and made exactly, "six hundred and sixty six." Thus, according to Roman figures, then in use,

Prophecies.			
L	-	-	50
V.	-	-	005
D.	-	-	500
O.	-	-	000
V.	-	-	005
I.	-	-	001
C.	-		100
V.	-	-	005
S.	-	-	000
			666

But, whether they were right in their prophecies or no, it cannot be determined.

The Book of Revelations, written by the spirit of inspiration, certainly alludes to the latter ages of the

world. Of that, there remains but little doubt. If, according to the youthful priest's interpretation of the name of the beast, it might agree with the tyrannical Louis de Valois, the Bourbons have so embellished the name of Louis, by their stedfast principles and many virtues, that if the prophecy was not verified in Louis XI., it must allude to some other Ludovicus, perhaps belonging to the family of Usurpation and Infamy.

Ideas have wandered from the fifteenth, to the present century; as that is not the intention of this history, the conduct of Louis XI., must again be adverted to: the ill-fated German prophetess was, at length, discovered, and confined by the suspicious tyrant.

Her sex, her harmless demeanour could not save her; she was imprisoned by his order, and undauntedly, she continued to utter the threatened downfal of his arbitrary power.

With the dread of private assassination, and the fear of impending predictions, such a monarch's life can have but very little enjoyment; and all his splendor is unable to excite one spark of envy in the bosom of cheerful and humble content: the pillow, he endeavours, in vain, to repose on; the gilded diadem that encircles his careful brow; are alike encompassed with goading thorns. To drive away terror and the anguish of remorse, Louis made use of his riches to extend his conquests, and enlarge his dominions, by bribing his enemies; and, as

he could always find bad principled men, in every nation, ready, for the sake of lucre, to betray their lawful masters, this artful tyrant often succeeded in his wishes and expectations.

An old hoary commander, who had long served in the English army, under the Yorkists, but yet was always secretly attached to the cause of Lancaster, undertook an important enterprize; but it must be remarked, that he was sent on this duty, which required an experienced and loyal general, by that ministry, who were chiefly composed of Lancastrians, and who wished to give the common enemy every advantage, sooner than to take it.

Prophecies now took their turn; and

spake by the mouths of Warwick, Pembroke, and all those great and hardy heroes, who joined experience to valour, in those warlike times. They all foreboded, that the old General would make a bungling hand of what he was going about; and Pembroke said, he feared his principles were not so sound as they ought to be. Too true were his prophecies! he did indeed make a bad hand of the important business he was engaged in; for the bowmen were found to be without arrows; the armour of the chiefs were broken; and they carried lances of wood, without being pointed with steel or iron; nay, it is credibly asserted, that two bowmen were shot, because they had arrows, ready in their bows, to face the enemy; who gained, by this treachery

and negligence, such a material advantage, that the general's army was totally defeated, and a considerable number of the Yorkists left dead on the field of battle.

CONCLUSION.

THESE pages were written during the seclusion of retirement, in a dreary and severe winter; and the author has left off at that period of Edward's life, when he was under a strict regimen, by order of his physicians, to restore to him, if possible, a state of health then fast declining, the effect of the intemperance of his early years.

After the death of his favourite Lovelace, he had ceased to acquire his wonted celebrity; and he exhibited no particular trait of notoriety, except his unbounded and constant attachment

to Lady Elizabeth Grey. Though the fame of the virtuous and accomplished Princess of Savoy rose more resplendent in snowy whiteness, since the insidious attacks of her calumniators; yet neither her amiability or personal charms were sufficient to awaken that interest in the breast of their prince, the nation at large had so fondly hoped for.

Both court and city were devoted as much to dissipation as they are at present. Neither the calamities or expences of war could prevent the growth of luxury and all its attendant evils. Arts and learning flourished and increased; but the artisan and the learned scholar, who, while he improved the understanding, endeavoured to ameliorate the morals of mankind, were frequently

left to perish, or at best to gain a competency, the most narrow, in pining obscurity. Wealthy ignorance raised high the haughty head against indigent wisdom, and displayed her broad, unmeaning, visage in those splendid assemblies, where modest worth and superior intelligence were refused admittance. If vice and folly had their purses well stored with gold, that all-powerful panacea was a passport to gain them access even in the highest circles. Pride, united with a coarse and a clownish dress and behaviour, distinguished the males of fashion: the females, half educated, and that chiefly in superficial accomplishments, studied only to vie with each other in the brilliancy of their entertainments, and the crowding of their parties, grown no

longer convivial; for the English character appeared totally changed from what it was formerly; it's ancient hospitality no longer existed. To appear in a *costume* the most varied and costly, to furnish lights in their superb apartments to imitate an "artificial day," were preferred to the plentiful treats which formerly made the tables of their forefathers groan under the weight of their abundance.

What rendered England the most happy at the period in which the author quits this anecdotal work, was a wise and judicious parliament; determined on humbling France, and disclaiming all fear of the tyrant of that kingdom, though he continued to extend his conquests and strengthen his alliances.

The finances of England were increased by the means of this inestiable ministry; who, by their vigilance, secured her possessions at home and abroad. The wealth of distant nations poured into the lap of Britain, and the continued exertions of talents and wisdom united, promised, in either peace or war, to render her flourishing and happy.

The reader of the foregoing pages must not imagine that the mind of the writer was cynical or morose: the author was of a very different character who seldom dipped the pen in gall; and it gave that author sincere pleasure, to bear testimony to the worth of several of the English nobility, who were an honour to the race from whence

they sprung. In those warlike times, and when the feudal system prevailed (though its root had been struck at by the voice of the people selecting their parliaments), yet the true noble and beneficent mind, in spite of gothic pride and ignorance, delighted to shew its affability to its inferiors. The son of a duke has undergone a wearisome march of many miles, till his shoes have been worn out, and he almost barefoot, has supported the voluntary toil with smiling good humour, that he might rest the weary little drummer, and other followers of the army, by giving up his horse to those wearied children of poverty, whom he has regarded in that moment of fatigue not as vassals, but as brethren: equal to all the pains of suffering humanity with

himself, and less able after their labour was at an end, to procure for themselves that comfort his own wealth could largely afford to purchase for him an oblivion in repose, for all he had endured.

Change not, generous Britons, this exalted character, inherent in your nature, for the foolish pride of notoriety, and that apathetic *nonchalance* which but too much mark the conduct of our youth: let not the love of the populace degenerate into an assimilation of their manners and dress, but like the truly noble Lord above cited, let it shew itself in uniting a proper sense of your own dignity, to the pleasure of conferring benefits on the weary and afflicted.

Conclusion.

The Author could not close these few pages, without offering the sincere tribute of grateful acknowledgment to a literary friend, to whom this work is indebted for the original Letter to the Princess of Savoy: it breathes that enthusiasm of female friendship and virtue, proud of the object of its reverence and affection, and laudably tenacious of the pure and untarnished fame of an illustrious individual.

THE END.

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